THE PROGRESS OF CANADA'S CHILDREN

2002

Canadian
Council
on Social
Development

Acknowledgements

The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) wishes to acknowledge the important contributions made to *The Progress of Canada's Children* by Human Resources Development Canada and Statistics Canada through their pioneering work on the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. This rich information resource provides the primary source of data for *The Progress of Canada's Children.*

The CCSD also wishes to thank the Laidlaw Foundation for their invaluable support for this project over the last seven years.

Thanks also to Health Canada and the National Crime Prevention Centre for their generous contributions towards the 2002 edition of *The Progress of Canada's Children.*

Special thanks to Human Resources Development Canada for its ongoing support of the CCSD's research work.

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National Library of Canada cataloguing

The progress of Canada's children

1996–

Also issued in French under title :
Le progrès des enfants au Canada.

ISSN 1208-9109

ISBN 0-88810-511-8 (2002 edition)

1. Children–Canada–Social conditions.
2. Children–Canada–Economic conditions.
3. Family–Canada–Social conditions.
4. Family–Canada–Economic conditions.
5. Social indicators–Canada.
6. Health status indicators–Canada.

I. Canadian Council on Social Development

HQ792.C3P8 1996- 305.23'0971'05 C97-300208-5

Design and layout: Accurate

Printed on Canadian-made recycled paper.

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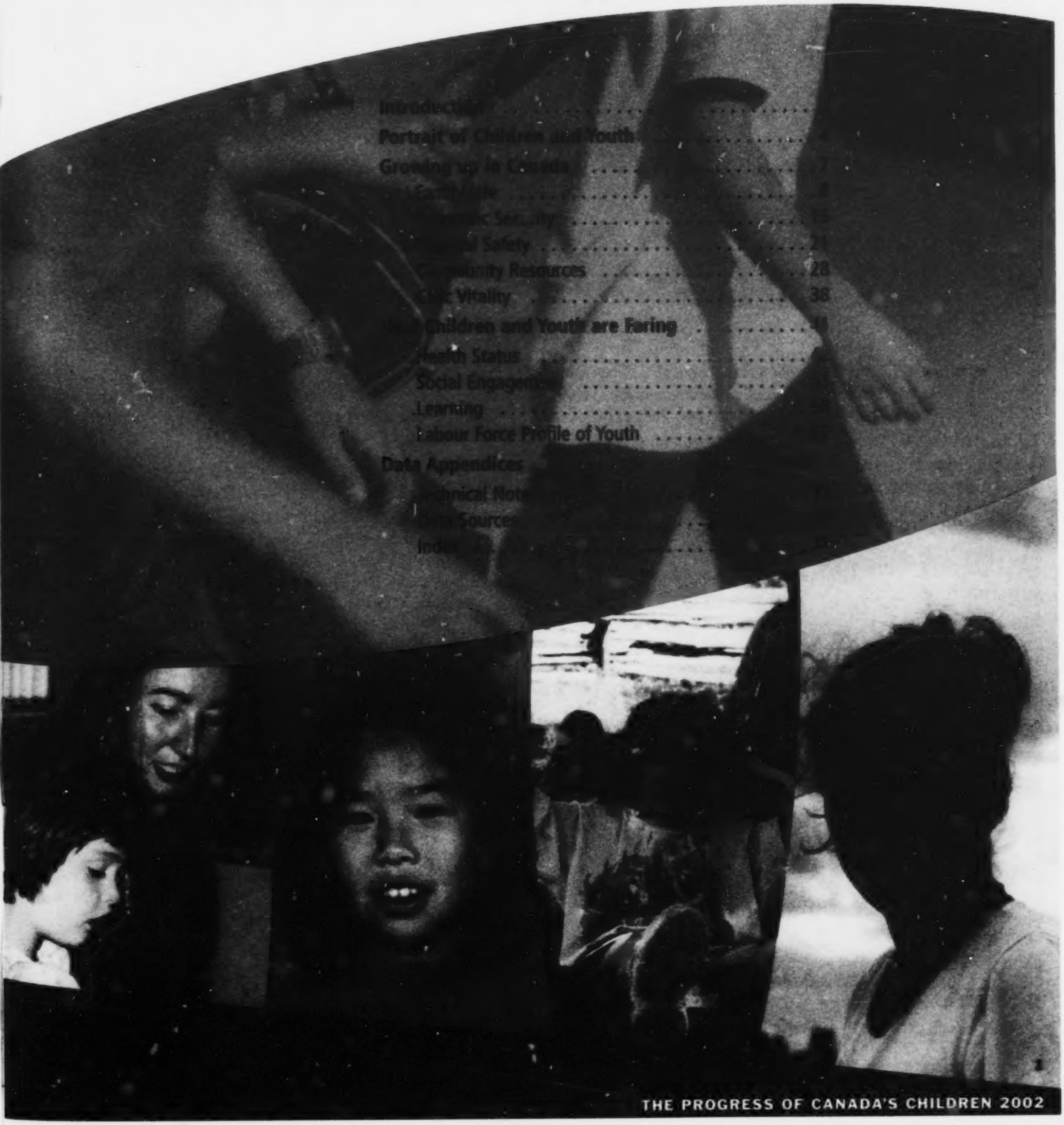

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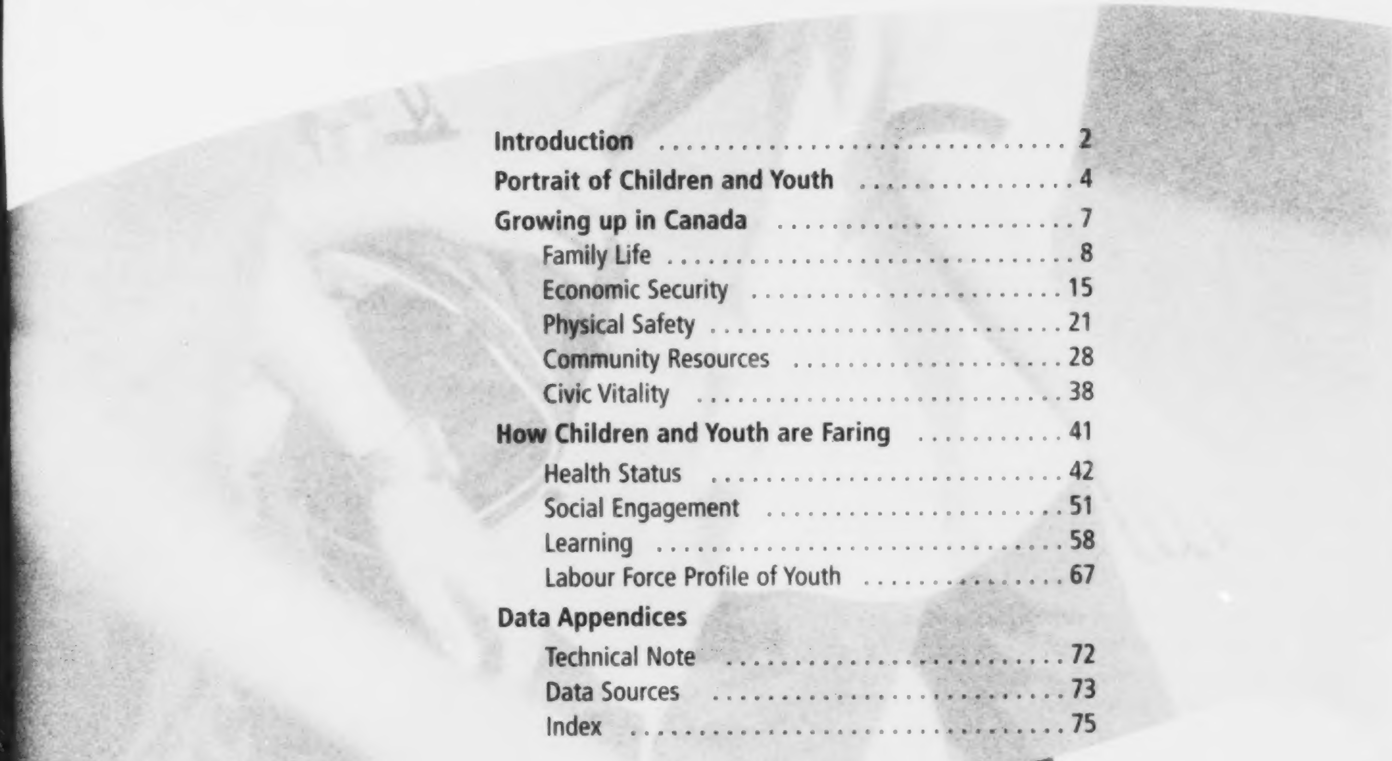

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INTRODUCTION

This year's report on *The Progress of Canada's Children* shows clear and mounting evidence that there are groups of children who are increasingly being excluded from fully participating in Canadian society. What does this mean?

Social exclusion occurs whenever the "environments where people grow up, live and work, and the institutions that govern them, arbitrarily limit their opportunity to participate in society."[1] The consequences of social exclusion can be devastating for children: they suffer a lack of recognition and acceptance; they feel powerless and voiceless; they are economically vulnerable; and ultimately, they have diminished life experiences and face limited life prospects.

As a result of being socially excluded, children can suffer developmental consequences that become cumulative. We now understand that children's experiences can change their biological development in ways that influence their future health, well-being and competence, even decades later.

Poverty is one of the most *fundamental* contributors to the social exclusion of children. And in this year's *Progress* report, we see that the rate of child poverty remains stubbornly high at 18.5%, and that poor children are very poor – the depth of poverty has changed very little over the last 10 years, remaining at almost $9,000 *below* the poverty line. In fact, the depth of poverty for Canada's poorest children – those whose parents are on social assistance – has actually increased. And most worrisome, the gap between rich and poor families keeps getting wider, so poor children are becoming even more alienated from other children.

Being hungry is perhaps the most blatant symptom of exclusion in Canadian society. Approximately 75,000 Canadian families experienced hunger in 1996. That's a lot of **hungry families** in a wealthy nation like ours, and it is 21,000 more families going hungry than even two years earlier!

Having adequate **housing** is another basic human need, one that is necessary for full participation in everyday life, yet stable and affordable housing in a child-friendly neighbourhood is out of reach for too many Canadian families.

And there are other, perhaps more frequent, manifestations of the social exclusion of Canada's children beyond material deprivation:

- Many children with disabilities can only observe the lives that other children lead, and we again see evidence of this in *Progress*. At **school**, children with special needs are not integrated nor included socially or academically at the same level as their peers without special needs. Community agencies lack the financial and human resources they need to adequately serve children and youth with special needs, while in places like Ontario, the number of schools with adequate specialist teachers and other professionals is rapidly declining.
- Many children and families are excluded from life's opportunities because of public policies and attitudes. The implementation of user fees for recreational activities, for example, results in some children being excluded from participating – which in turn, leads to less positive and less successful experiences in school, lower self-esteem, and decreased social skills.

Social inclusion is a complex concept that cannot be reduced to only one measurement. The Laidlaw Foundation has identified five critical cornerstones of social inclusion that can be used to consider how well our society values and treats its young population:

- **Valued recognition** – Policies and programs that recognize the differences in children's development and do not equate disability with pathology; support for community schools that is sensitive to cultural and gender differences; and public policy recognition of common worth through universal programs such as health care.

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[1] *Clyde Hertzman.* Leave No Child Behind! Social Exclusion and Child Development. Summary Report. *Laidlaw Foundation, 2002.*

- **Human development** – Ensuring learning and developmental opportunities for all children; community child care and recreational programs for children that are growth-promoting and challenging, rather than merely custodial.
- **Involvement and engagement** – Youth engagement and control of services for youth; and parental input into school curricula or placement decisions that affect their children.
- **Proximity** – Shared public spaces such as parks and libraries; mixed-income neighbourhoods and housing; and integrated schools and classrooms.
- **Material well-being** – This includes being safely and securely housed and having an adequate income.

The results in this year's *Progress of Canada's Children* report point to a heightened need for Canadians to become more vigilant in the care and nurturing of ALL our children. Our society is paying – and will continue to pay – the price for excluding large segments of the population – especially our youngest and most vulnerable citizens, in whose hands our collective future rests. ◆

What do young people say about social inclusion?

In focus groups organized by the CCSD, young people aged 12 to 24 seemed to understand the connection between attachment and vulnerability. Several stated that without a strong attachment to people – such as a group of friends – young people risk being excluded from their social landscape. According to many youth, social exclusion invariably results in an increased vulnerability.

- *"I know a guy who doesn't talk to anyone and he has no friends. People are always teasing him and harassing him because he doesn't have any support."* (13-year-old)
- *"Some kids don't have any friends and are social outcasts. They aren't treated very well by most of the other kids at school."* (14-year-old)
- *"The fact that I have a group of friends makes me feel pretty well included."* (18-year-old)

School is also recognized as a source of inclusion – or exclusion. When asked what were the most significant sources of stress among their peers, kids aged 12 to 14 focused on issues related to the social dynamics of their schools. The young people cited one's physical appearance, academic pressures, drugs, and one's social reputation as their biggest sources of stress. ◆

Young People and September 11th

When asked what word or phrase they associated with September 11th, participants at the CCSD focus groups cited "terror," "devastation," "death," and "hate." When asked to share their experiences, the majority of young people described feelings of sorrow, disbelief, confusion and fear as they realized the significance of what had happened. In addition, many participants described feeling overwhelmed by both the severity and the scale of the September 11th attacks.

- *"I was really scared and confused"* (12-year-old)
- *"I thought it was a movie…It didn't appear to be real."* (13-year-old)

The majority of young people voiced great sympathy for those who had perished in the attacks, and they were equally empathetic for the families of victims. Many felt that as Canadians, they were much closer to the terror than people in other countries. These feelings of vulnerability manifested themselves as fear among some youth that Canada might also become a target of terrorists, and many felt that the attacks of September 11th represented a threat to their own personal security. Several cited a new-found fear of travelling and a generally heightened sense of insecurity.

- *"I am definitely afraid of flying now."* (20-year-old)
- *"I am more paranoid about everyday life than I used to be."* (21-year-old)

Perhaps the most noteworthy trend was the young people's disillusionment with the United States and its policies since the attacks. The vast majority of youth in all age groups expressed feelings of uneasiness with American foreign and military policies, and strong resentment of Canada's willing association with such policies. Many youth felt that Canadian policy was being dictated to and controlled by the American government.

- *"I see the U.S. differently now. They have rushed to judgment on the Arab world and unleashed their military on a country that barely exists on its own."* (17-year-old)
- *"We are like sheep to the American shepherd."* (18-year-old)

There was a palpable sense of disillusionment with American policies – both pre- and post-September 11th – from the young people. They felt the American tendency to meddle in international affairs had put them in a vulnerable position, and the one-sided perspective offered by their media undermined the reality of the situation. ◆

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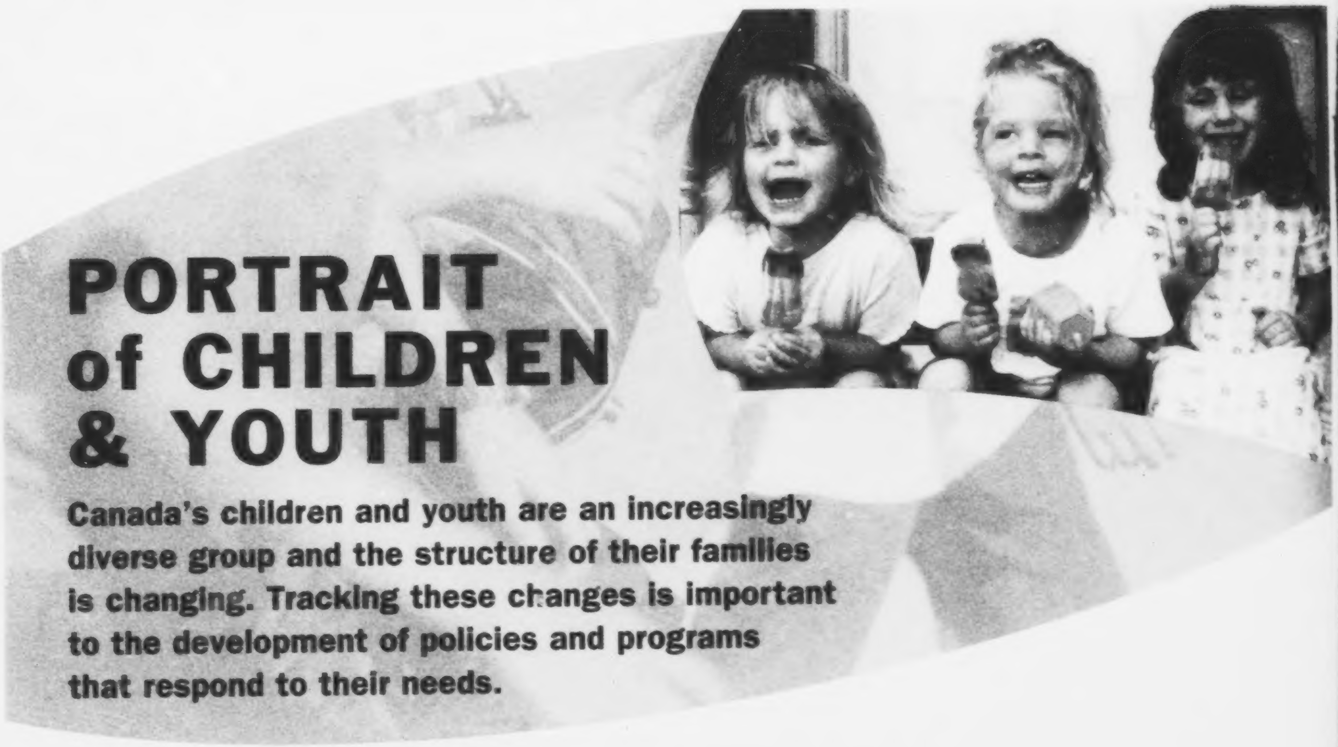


PORTRAIT of CHILDREN & YOUTH

Canada's children and youth are an increasingly diverse group and the structure of their families is changing. Tracking these changes is important to the development of policies and programs that respond to their needs.

A DEMOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT: 1994 to 2000

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAKE UP ONE-THIRD OF OUR POPULATION

In the year 2000, there were 10,023,700 children and youth under the age of 24 living in Canada:

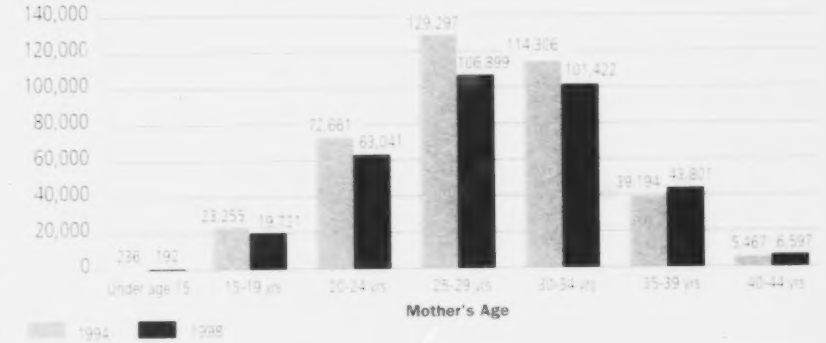
- 5,870,900 were children under age 15;
- 4,152,800 were youth aged 15 to 24.

The total number of children and youth in Canada has grown by only 0.4% since 1994, and their proportion of Canada's population has remained stable at about one-third (34% in 1994; 33% in 2000). While other age categories increased in size, the number of children under age 5 decreased. In 1994, there were 2,005,400 children under age 5; by 2000, that figure had dropped by 11% to 1,777,330.

MORE CHILDREN ARE CITY DWELLERS

Most Canadian children and youth live in the country's largest urban centres. In 2000, almost two-thirds of all children and youth under age 20 (64%) lived in large urban centres, compared to 56% in 1994.

NUMBER OF BIRTHS, BY AGE OF MOTHER, 1994 & 1998



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Annual Demographic Statistics, 1995 and 2000.

THERE ARE FEWER BABIES AND MORE OLDER MOTHERS

Since 1994, the number of babies born each year in Canada has decreased. There were 342,418 babies born in Canada in 2000 – a decline of 11% since 1994, when 385,110 were born.

However, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of births to older women. While the majority of children are born to mothers between the ages of 25 and 34 – accounting for 61% of all births in Canada in 1998 – more women are postponing childbirth. Between 1994 and 1998, there was a dramatic increase in the number of births to women aged 35 to 44: a 12% increase in births among women aged 35 to 39 and a 21% increase among women aged 40 to 44.

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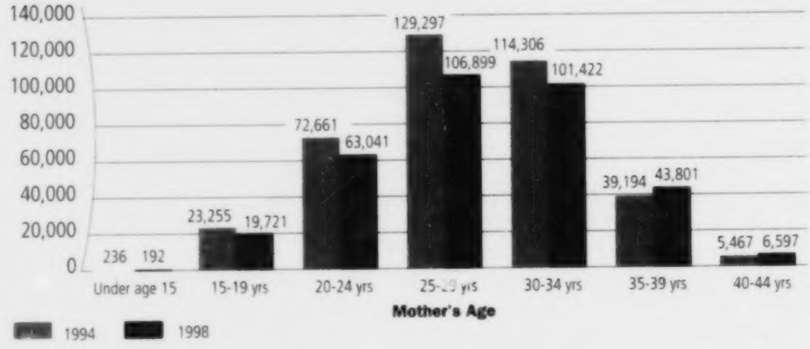

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CHANGING NUMBER OF LONE-PARENT FAMILIES, 1994 to 2000

	% change
Canada	25.8%
NFLD	12.4%
PEI	28.1%
NS	28.0%
NB	14.0%
QC	21.6%
ON	30.9%
MB	10.7%
SK	24.9%
AB	16.2%
BC	36.9%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Annual Demographic Statistics, 1995 and 2000.

In addition, fertility rates among women aged 15 to 34 declined between 1994 and 1998, and increased among women aged 35 to 44. In 1994, the fertility rate for women aged 35 to 39 was 30.9 births per 1,000 population; by 1998, that rate had increased by 6%, to 32.8. Among women aged 40 to 44, fertility rates were 4.8 births per 1,000 population in 1994, rising to 5.2 by 1998 – an increase of 8%.

THERE ARE MORE LONE-PARENT FAMILIES

The number of lone-parent families in Canada is rising at a much faster rate than that of two-parent families. In 1994, there were 1,025,758 male and female lone-parent families in Canada. By 1998, that figure had jumped by 26%, to 1,290,774.

Between 1994 and 2000, the number of female lone-parent families grew by 27% and male lone-parent families increased by 18%. Most lone-parent families are headed by women. In 2000, 84% of all lone parents in Canada were female, up from 82% in 1994.

All Canadian provinces showed an increase in the number of lone-parent families over this six-year period, but there was a large gap in the rates of growth. The number of lone-parent families in British Columbia rose by almost 37%, while the increase in Manitoba was less than 11%.

Of all Canadian families with children in 1994, 21% were headed by a lone parent; by 2000, that figure had increased to 24%. ◆

Aboriginal Children and Families

Unlike the overall pattern in Canada, the proportion of Aboriginal children and youth has been growing – in 1996, they represented 53% of all Aboriginal people. Canada's 424,000 Aboriginal young people constitute 5% of all children under age 15 and 4% of youth aged 15 to 24.

Aboriginal children and youth include those identified as North American Indian, Métis or Inuit.

Here are some characteristics of Aboriginal children and families:

Younger parents: 12% of Aboriginal families are headed by a parent under age 25, compared to 3% in the general Canadian population.

More single parents: 27% of Aboriginal families with young children are headed by a single parent, compared to 13% in the general population.

Lower income: 39% of Aboriginal single mothers earn less than $12,000 a year, whereas 22% of single mothers in the general population earn so little.

Bigger families: 10% of respondents in the First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey lived in families with more than four children under age 11 living at home, compared to 0% of respondents in the NLSCY. ◆

Immigrant Children in Canada

Almost 23% of Canadian newcomers are under 15

In 2000, just over 51,000 children under age 15 immigrated to Canada – an increase of 13% over the 45,000 who came to Canada in 1990. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, almost 23% of all immigrants to Canada in 2000 and nearly 40% of all refugees were children and youth under 15.

It is estimated that 20% of Canada's children (under age 18) are immigrants or children of immigrant parents, and it is projected that this proportion will increase to 25% by the year 2016.

The countries of origin for immigrant children and youth are changing. Between 1996 and 1998, almost half of immigrant children came from the Asia and Pacific regions, almost one-quarter came from Africa/the Middle East and about the same proportion came from Europe/United Kingdom. Fewer children came from South/Central America and the United States.

More children belong to visible minority groups

Increasing proportions of immigrant children are from visible minority groups. Thirty-two per cent of immigrant children who came to Canada before 1986 belong to visible minority groups, compared to 56% of more recent immigrant children. Only 2% of non-immigrant children belong to a visible minority group.

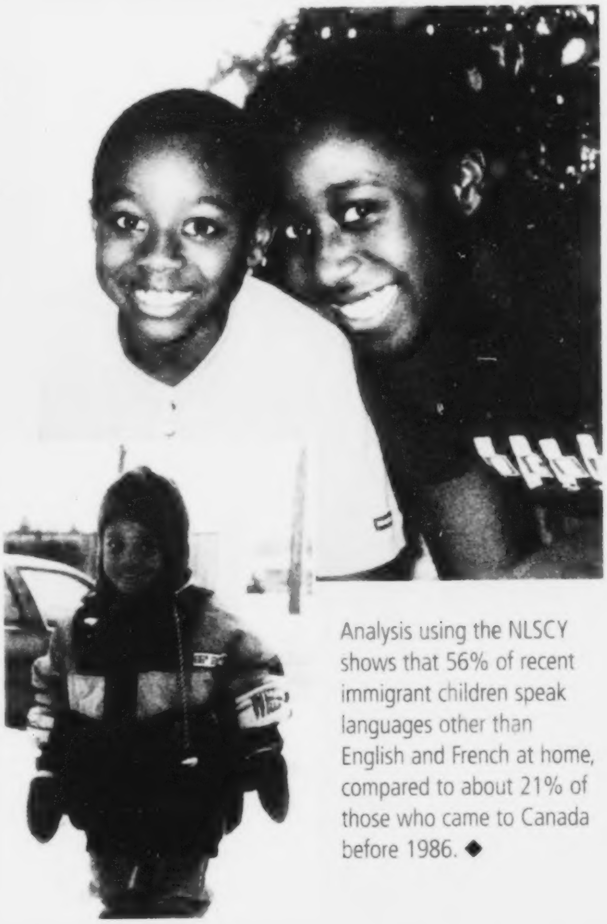
Many must learn a new language

It is no surprise, given their countries of birth, that almost two of every three children who immigrated to Canada between 1997 and 1999 could speak neither English nor French upon their arrival. Older children were more likely than younger children to speak one or both official languages.

LANGUAGE ABILITIES OF CHILDREN WHO IMMIGRATED 1997 to 1999, BY AGE GROUP

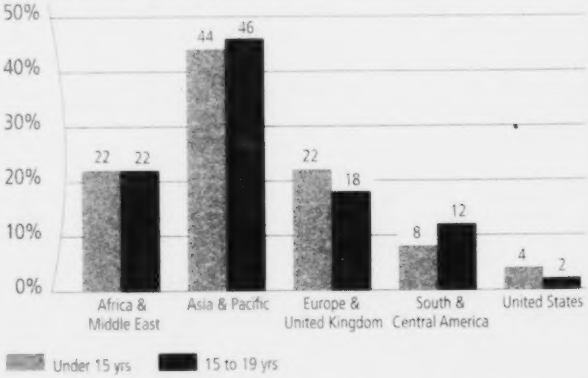
Per cent who speak official language	0 to 4 yrs	Age group 5 to 9 yrs	10 to 14 yrs
English	17.6	28.0	32.3
French	3.2	4.4	4.0
Both	0.2	0.6	0.7
Neither	79.0	67.0	63.0

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Citizen and Immigration Canada's Facts and Figures. 1999.



Analysis using the NLSCY shows that 56% of recent immigrant children speak languages other than English and French at home, compared to about 21% of those who came to Canada before 1986. ◆

REGIONS OF ORIGIN FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH WHO IMMIGRATED 1996 to 1998, BY AGE GROUP



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using custom data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 1999.

Growing Up in Canada

How do we know whether children and youth have what they need to become healthy, self-reliant adults? In this section of *The Progress of Canada's Children*, we assess five broad social and economic indicators that are critical to the life chances of Canadian children:

- family life
- economic security
- physical safety
- community resources
- civic vitality.

Within each of these five broad indicators, we examine specific determinants of well-being such as the effects on children of different family structures and dynamics, their access to recreational opportunities, the deteriorating quality of their natural environment, and their connections to – or exclusion from – communities.

Taken together, these determinants represent the investments that families, communities, and society make in our children and youth. The success of today's young people reflects social, economic and civic investments made in the past. While factors such as their relationships with peers, adequate family incomes, or access to health and social services do not always guarantee that children and youth will be happy and healthy, they increase the odds that Canadian children will thrive and become successful, contributing citizens.

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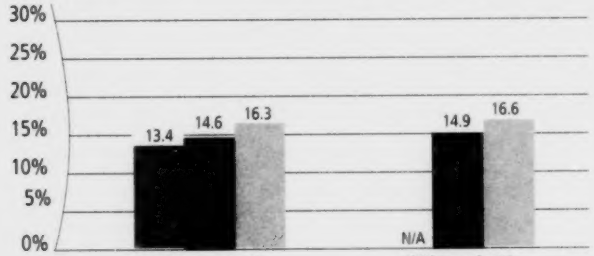
WHAT DO FAMILIES LOOK LIKE?

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) has a wealth of data on Canadian families, which *Progress* has analyzed to produce this picture of family life. In particular, the NLSCY enables us to look at trends among children under age 12.

DIFFERENT FAMILY STRUCTURES

The vast majority of children (84%) under age 16 live in two-parent families. In 1998, 5.1 million children under age 16 lived in two-parent families. However, as we saw earlier in *Progress*, a growing number of children are living in lone-parent families. The proportion of children under 12 living in lone-parent families increased from 13% in 1994 to 16% by 1998.

CHILDREN IN LONE-PARENT FAMILIES, 1994, 1996 & 1998



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, & 1998.

An increasing proportion of young children are living in step-families. Over 550,000 children under age 16 lived in step-families in 1998. They represent 9% of that population. Among children under 12, almost 400,000, or 8.8%, lived in step-families in 1998 – up from 7.5% in 1994.

FAMILY SIZE

Approximately 1.2 million children under age 16 in 1998 had no siblings. They represent 19% of that population. Almost three million (or 46.1%) had one sibling, just over 1.5 million (or 25%) had two siblings, and 620,000 (10%) had three or more siblings. These proportions have remained stable since 1994.

PARENTAL AGE

In 1998, over 300,000 children under age 16 lived with two parents who were under 30 years of age. They represent 5.6% of that population.

Among children under age 12, 333,000 children (or 7.7%) lived with two parents who were under 30. Since 1994, that proportion has remained virtually unchanged (7.9%).

Children living with young parents are more likely to live in low income. In 1998, 53.1% of all children whose parents were less than 30 years old had a household income of less than $40,000 – compared with 35% of those whose parents were over 30. The proportion of children living with young parents, and in low income, was down slightly from 56.2% in 1994.

CANADIAN FAMILIES ON THE MOVE

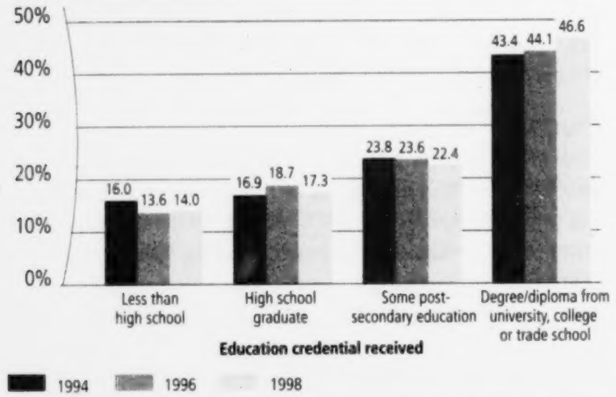
Approximately 332,000 children under age 16 in 1998 had moved or changed their place of residence three or more times. They represent 8.8% of that population.

Children in lower-income households are more likely to move often. In 1998, 70% of all children under 15 living in families with household incomes over $60,000 had never moved. That compared with 63% of children in households with incomes between $30,000 and $59,999, and 44% of children whose family income was less than $30,000. One in five of all children in families with incomes under $30,000 had moved three or more times.

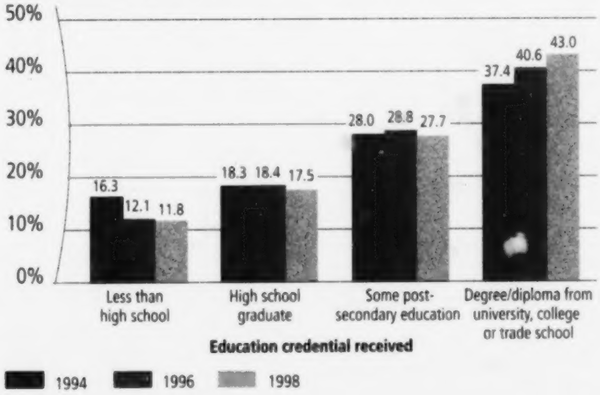
PARENTS' EDUCATION

More children are living with parents who have post-secondary education. Almost half of all children up to age 11 in 1998 had a father with a degree or diploma from a university, college or trade school – up 5% from 1994. In addition, 43% of children up to age 11 in 1998 had a mother with a degree or diploma from a university, college or trade school – up from 37% in 1994. ◆

FATHER'S EDUCATION
% of children aged 0-11



MOTHER'S EDUCATION
% of children aged 0-11



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, & 1998.

Parents, children and work

Most children under age 15 in two-parent families (63%) had both parents employed full-time in 1998. More than one child in five (21%) had a parent employed full-time, with the other parent not in the labour force. An additional 11% of children had one parent employed full-time and the other part-time. Relatively few children aged 15 and under had both parents employed on a part-time basis or less (5%).

As children get older, it is more likely that both parents are in the labour force. About half of children under age 1 had both parents employed full-time in 1998. That increased to 69% for teens aged 13 to 15.

Using the NLSCY data, we can relate the parents' work status with household incomes and the age of children in the family. In households with children where both parents were employed full-time, the average income was $78,425.

When parents worked part-time or less, the family had an average household income of just $29,205.

PARENTS' LABOUR FORCE STATUS
Children aged 0-15 in two-parent families, 1998

	Age of Child				
	0 to 1	2 to 5	6 to 9	10 to 12	13 to 15
Both parents worked full-time	50%	59%	64%	67%	69%
One worked full-time/one part-time	15%	12%	12%	10%	9%
Both worked part-time or less	7%	5%	5%	4%	4%
One worked full-time/one not in labour force	27%	25%	20%	18%	18%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

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FAMILY LIFE

The structure of the family and the character of relationships within it make up the primary setting for child development.

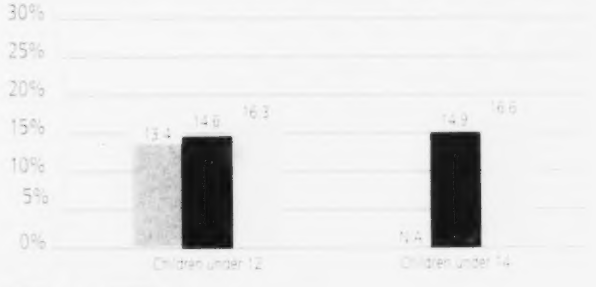
WHAT DO FAMILIES LOOK LIKE?

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) has a wealth of data on Canadian families, which *Progress* has analyzed to produce this picture of family life. In particular, the NLSCY enables us to look at trends among children under age 12.

DIFFERENT FAMILY STRUCTURES

The vast majority of children (84%) under age 16 live in two-parent families. In 1998, 5.1 million children under age 16 lived in two-parent families. However, as we saw earlier in *Progress*, a growing number of children are living in lone-parent families. The proportion of children under 12 living in lone-parent families increased from 13% in 1994 to 16% by 1998.

CHILDREN IN LONE-PARENT FAMILIES, 1994, 1996 & 1998



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996 & 1998.

An increasing proportion of young children are living in step-families. Over 550,000 children under age 16 lived in step-families in 1998. They represent 9% of that population. Among children under 12, almost 400,000, or 8.8%, lived in step-families in 1998 – up from 7.5% in 1994.

FAMILY SIZE

Approximately 1.2 million children under age 16 in 1998 had no siblings. They represent 19% of that population. Almost three million (or 46.1%) had one sibling, just over 1.5 million (or 25%) had two siblings, and 620,000 (10%) had three or more siblings. These proportions have remained stable since 1994.

PARENTAL AGE

In 1998, over 300,000 children under age 16 lived with two parents who were under 30 years of age. They represent 5.6% of that population.

Among children under age 12, 333,000 children (or 7.7%) lived with two parents who were under 30. Since 1994, that proportion has remained virtually unchanged (7.9%).

Children living with young parents are more likely to live in low income. In 1998, 53.1% of all children whose parents were less than 30 years old had a household income of less than $40,000 – compared with 35% of those whose parents were over 30. The proportion of children living with young parents, and in low income, was down slightly from 56.2% in 1994.

CANADIAN FAMILIES ON THE MOVE

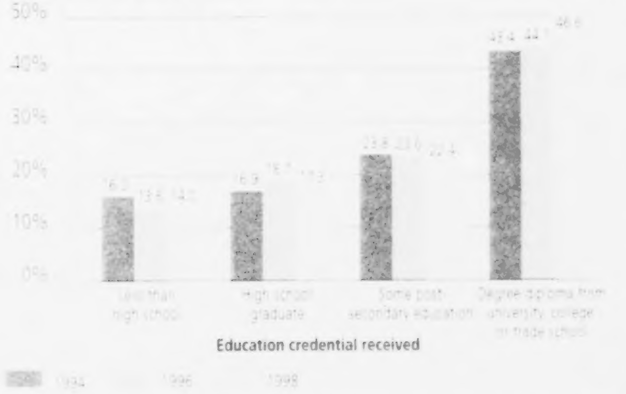
Approximately 332,000 children under age 16 in 1998 had moved or changed their place of residence three or more times. They represent 8.8% of that population.

Children in lower-income households are more likely to move often. In 1998, 70% of all children under 15 living in families with household incomes over $60,000 had never moved. That compared with 63% of children in households with incomes between $30,000 and $59,999, and 44% of children whose family income was less than $30,000. One in five of all children in families with incomes under $30,000 had moved three or more times.

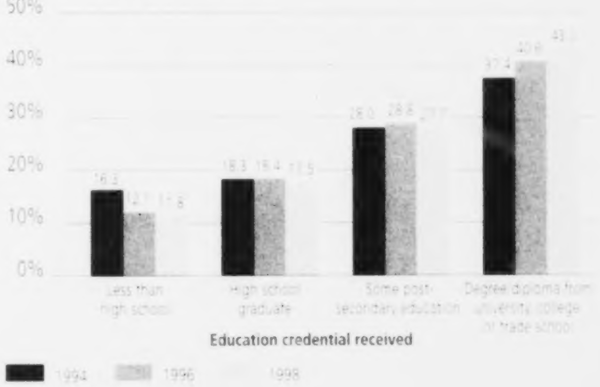
PARENTS' EDUCATION

More children are living with parents who have post-secondary education. Almost half of all children up to age 11 in 1998 had a father with a degree or diploma from a university, college or trade school – up 5% from 1994. In addition, 43% of children up to age 11 in 1998 had a mother with a degree or diploma from a university, college or trade school – up from 37% in 1994. ◆

FATHER'S EDUCATION
% of children aged 0-11



MOTHER'S EDUCATION
% of children aged 0-11



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY 1994, 1996, & 1998.

Parents, children and work

Most children under age 15 in two-parent families (63%) had both parents employed full-time in 1998. More than one child in five (21%) had a parent employed full-time, with the other parent not in the labour force. An additional 11% of children had one parent employed full-time and the other part-time. Relatively few children aged 15 and under had both parents employed on a part-time basis or less (5%).

As children get older, it is more likely that both parents are in the labour force. About half of children under age 1 had both parents employed full-time in 1998. That increased to 69% for teens aged 13 to 15.

Using the NLSCY data, we can relate the parents' work status with household incomes and the age of children in the family. In households with children where both parents were employed full-time, the average income was $78,425. When parents worked part-time or less, the family had an average household income of just $29,205.

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Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

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PARENTS' WORK PATTERNS & FAMILY FUNCTIONING
Children aged 0-15 in two-parent families, 1998

	Score on dysfunction scale*
Both parents worked full-time	8.2
One worked full-time/one part-time	8.0
Both worked part-time or less	10.0
One worked full-time/one not in labour force	8.9

**Scores range from 0 to 36, with a higher score indicating greater dysfunction*
Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

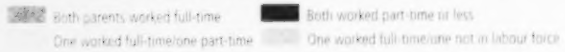
Shift work

What kinds of shifts do parents work? The majority of children (84%) had at least one parent working a regular daytime shift, while 15% had at least one parent who worked irregular shifts. Relatively few children had a parent who regularly worked nights (4%), was on-call (4%), or worked split shifts (2%). However, more than half of all children (55%) had at least one parent who regularly worked weekends.

Children's well-being

The parents' working status appears to have an impact on children's well-being, particularly when parents are not fully employed. We looked at three indicators of child well-being: children's health, as described by their parents; how the children were doing in school; and family functioning. When both parents worked part-time or less, children seemed to do less well. For example, when both parents were employed part-time or less, they were less likely to say that their children were in excellent health or that they were doing very well in school. Levels of family dysfunction were also higher in families where both parents were employed part-time or less. They scored 10 on a scale of 0-36, compared to a score of 8.2 for children whose parents were both employed full-time. ◆

CHILDREN'S HEALTH & SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, BY PARENTS' WORK PATTERNS
Children aged 0-15 in two-parent families, 1998



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

FAMILY DYNAMICS

For several years now, *Progress* has been tracking what is happening to families. We have seen that the structure of families, their size, the environments in which they live, and the ways in which they work are dramatically changing. But how are families coping in light of all this change? Using data from the NLSCY, *Progress* has tracked a number of indicators of family dynamics – parental depression, the quality of family relationships, parenting styles, family supports, and discipline.

What did we find? It is encouraging that from 1994 to 1998, the majority of Canadian families continued to cope very well, and in fact, improved on a number of indicators. But the discouraging news is that some families continue to struggle.

PARENTS' HEALTH

Close to three-quarters of Canadian children live with parents who report that they are in good health, and this has been consistent through the years. Parents of younger children are more likely than parents of older children to say that their health is very good or excellent.

Ten per cent of children under 12 live in families where a parent is restricted in their activities at home because of a health condition – a figure which has remained virtually unchanged since 1994. And in 1998, 4% of children lived with a parent who was restricted in their ability to care for their child because of a health condition. Far more parents reported that they had a chronic health condition – just over half of all children under 12 lived with a parent who made such a report.

When a parent suffers from depression, it can have a profound effect on the development and well-being of their children. Depressed parents are often despondent about the future; they lack energy and are emotionally withdrawn. Fortunately, the vast majority of children in Canada live with parents who do not suffer from depression. According to the NLSCY, the proportion of children under 12 who live with a parent who has symptoms of depression has decreased slightly since 1994.

The 1998 data again showed that parental depression is associated with household income. As families moved up the income scale, the proportion of children living with a depressed parent decreased – 20% of children in families with household incomes under $10,000 lived with a depressed parent, compared with 5% of children in households with income over $40,000.

FAMILY FUNCTIONING

The quality of family relationships is particularly important for the healthy development of children. Research has shown a significant connection between family dysfunction and mental health problems among children. The NLSCY measures family

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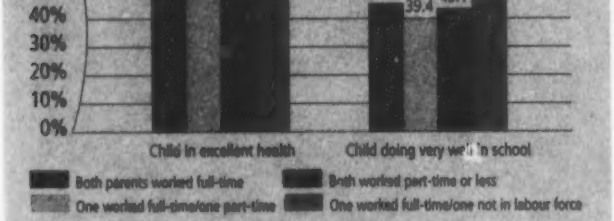

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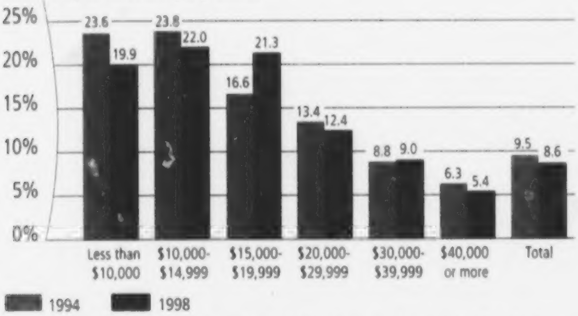
PARENTAL DEPRESSION, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1994 & 1998
% of children under 12 living with a parent with depressive symptoms



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, & 1998.

functioning by looking at how well a family works together – for example, how they solve problems, communicate with each other, treat each other emotionally, and assume their various roles.

The majority of Canadian children live in families that function well, and this has held steady since 1994 – 88% of families with children under 16 function well. Households with higher incomes had a lower proportion of children considered to be living in "dysfunctional" families than were found in lower-income households – 23% of all children under 16 with family incomes under $20,000 lived in families considered to be "dysfunctional," compared with 9% of children in families with household incomes over $40,000.

FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORKS

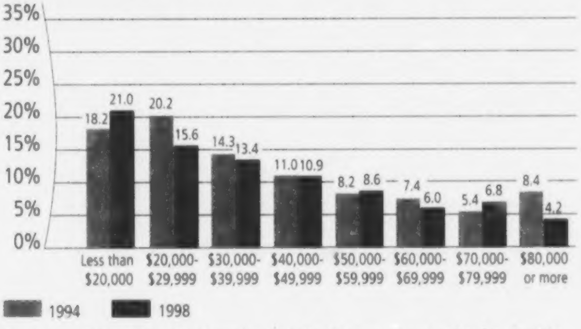
Networks within and outside the family often provide much-needed support for children and their parents. If a child does not receive adequate care within the family, support networks can provide them with positive and nurturing experiences. Support for parents from family members, friends or neighbours is also important in helping them to cope with the stresses of raising children. According to the NLSCY, 8.8% of children under age 11 in 1998 lived in families with low levels of social support, down from 10.7% in 1994.

Children in families with low incomes are more likely to have parents who report low levels of social support. For example, in 1998, one in five children whose family income was under $20,000 per year lived with low levels of social support, compared with 4% of children whose family income was over $80,000. And the incidence of low social support seems to be rising most among those in low income.

PARENTING STYLES

A positive parenting style has long been recognized as a critical factor for healthy child development. For example, the NLSCY shows that more than any other aspect of a family's background, having a hostile parent negatively influences a child's ability to form relationships with others. Fortunately most parents report having positive interactions with their children, and they try to be consistent in dealing with them. While this type of self-assessment does not provide conclusive evidence about how parents interact with their children, it does show generally that parents are aware of the importance of providing children with an affectionate and loving environment. There is very little difference in parenting styles according to family incomes.

SOCIAL SUPPORTS, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 1994 & 1998
% of children under 12 living with a parent with low social support



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, & 1998.

PARENTING STYLES, 1994, 1996 & 1998
Based on parental reports

	1994	1996	1998
Positive interactions with children under age 2	90.8%	91.9%	93.8%
Positive interactions with children aged 2-11	87.1%	90.5%	88.8%
Ineffective parenting with children under age 2	13.8%	11.9%	12.2%
Ineffective parenting with children aged 2-11	12.1%	11.8%	10.3%
Inconsistent parenting with children aged 2-11	11.8%	10.3%	9.4%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, & 1998.

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POSITIVE PARENTING

The NLSCY provides us with many indicators of positive (and negative) parenting behaviours. The data indicate that the majority of children live with parents who provide positive parenting, and this has been consistent over the years.

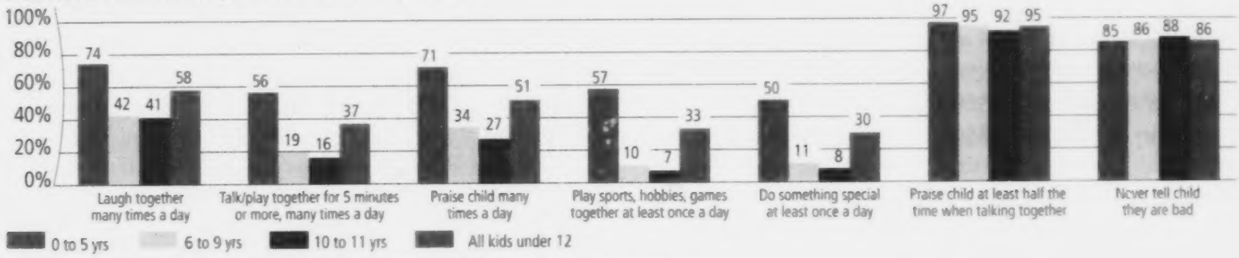
It seems that young children are more likely than older children to have parents who use positive parenting behaviour. For example, 74% of parents of children up to age 5 report that they laugh together many times a day, whereas only 42% of parents of children aged 6 to 9, and 41% of parents of children aged 10 to 11 make this claim. There were very few differences related to family type or income – indicating that both low-income parents and single parents, despite their hardships, are positively parenting their young children.

PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

There is growing evidence that using physical punishment can have a negative impact on a child's mental health. In Canada, the majority of parents do not use physical punishment with their children – and their numbers are increasing.

Parents are less likely to use physical punishment with older children than with younger children, and they are less likely to use physical punishment with female children than with male children: 66% of those with girls under 12 say they never use physical punishment, compared to 62% of parents of boys under 12. Parents in two-parent families and those with higher household incomes are less likely to use physical punishment than are those in single-parent families and those who have lower household incomes. ◆

POSITIVE PARENTING, BY AGE OF CHILD, 1998



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

Immigrant Children in Families

How do the experiences of recent immigrant children who came to Canada after 1986 compare with those of Canadian-born children and immigrant families who arrived before 1986?

They live in larger families than do earlier immigrants and non-immigrant children. While 43% of recent immigrant children lived in families of five or more, only 41% of earlier immigrant children and 35% of non-immigrant children had families of that size.

They are more likely to have one or both parents working more than 50 hours a week – 44% compared to 38% among non-immigrant children.

They are more likely to live in lower-income households. Thirty-three per cent of recent immigrant children lived in families with incomes below Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs (LICOs). Twenty per cent of non-immigrant children and 15% of earlier immigrant children lived in families with similar low incomes.

They are more likely to have at least one parent who experiences symptoms of depression. They are less likely than non-immigrant children to live in lone-parent families – 13% compared with 18%, and they are equally likely to witness violence among family members. ◆

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING, BY IMMIGRANT STATUS, 1998
For children aged 0-15

Family structure / Functioning	Recent Immigrants (1986 to present)	Earlier Immigrants (before 1986)	Non-immigrants
No. persons in household			
3-4	57.0%	58.0%	65.0%
5-6	36.0%	37.0%	32.0%
7+	7.0%	4.0%	3.0%
Children in lone-parent families	13.0%	11.0%	18.0%
At least one parent with symptoms of depression	11.7%	7.8%	8.2%
Witness violence among family members	2.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Children in families below LICO	33.0%	15.0%	20.0%
One or more parent working 50+ hours per week	44.0%	33.0%	38.0%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

FAMILY LIFE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Children living in families which are struggling are more likely to be excluded from some of the fundamental aspects of life essential to their healthy development.

Using data from the NLSCY, *Progress* found that children are less likely to have positive experiences at school, less likely to participate in recreation, and to get along well with friends, if they live in families struggling with parental depression, family dysfunction or violence. Family poverty also has a profound effect on children's school experiences and their access to recreation, but poor kids are just as likely as other children to get along very well with their peers.

SCHOOL LIFE

In 1998, 25% of children aged 10 to 15 who lived with a parent suffering from depression reported that they were doing very well in school, compared with 32% of children whose parents did not report depression. Nineteen per cent* of young people living with a parent who was depressed said they either hated school or did not like it very much, compared with 15% among other children.

Thirty-two per cent of children in families which were functioning well reported that they were doing very well in school, compared with only 25% of those living in families reported to be dysfunctional. Fifteen per cent of children in well-functioning families said they hated school or did not like it very much, compared with 19% among those living in dysfunctional families.

One-third of children who had never seen violence at home felt they were doing very well in school, compared with about one-fifth of children who sometimes or often witnessed family violence. Nineteen per cent of children who had witnessed family violence said they liked school very much, compared with 24% of those who had not witnessed family violence.

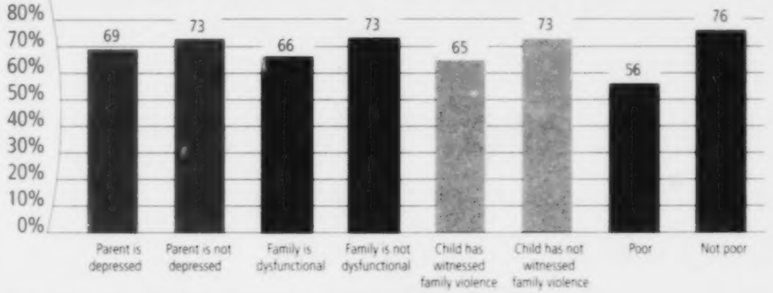
Almost one-third (32%) of children from families living above the LICO reported that they were doing very well in school, compared with one-fifth (22%) of poor children. Twenty-seven per cent of children who were not poor said they liked school very much, compared with 22% among those who were poor.

RECREATION AND FRIENDSHIPS

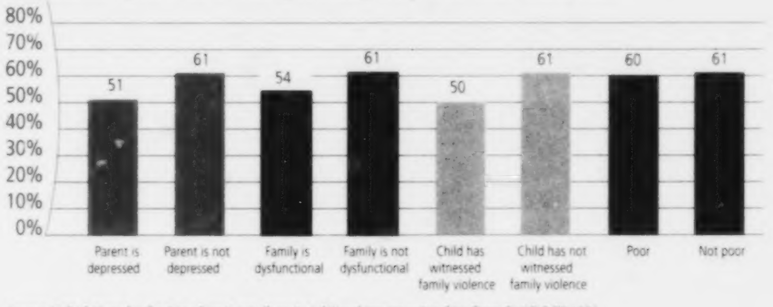
Participating in recreation is a critical part of a child's life, and it contributes to their healthy development. When families are struggling, children often become excluded from this important part of their lives.

Children need friends. Kids who are excluded from their peer groups often feel lonely, they have lower self-esteem, and they are more likely to have emotional and behavioural problems. Children aged 4 to 9 who were living in families struggling with parental depression, family dysfunction or violence were less likely to report that they got along very well with their peers. However, poverty did not seem to affect these relationships. ◆

RECREATION AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING, 1998
% of children aged 4 to 15 who participate in recreation at least once a week



RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING, 1998
% children aged 4 to 9 who get along very well with other kids



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

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* *Data less reliable due to sample size*

Parents have greater difficulty balancing work and family life

The 1990s were a decade of change for working families. According to researchers Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins, the conflict between work and family life has increased markedly – which means a higher proportion of parents are experiencing greater challenges in balancing their roles as employees, parents, spouses, and elder-care givers. Workers have become more stressed, their physical and mental health has declined, and so has their satisfaction with life.

Despite increased awareness and attention to gender issues, motherhood continues to be more stressful than fatherhood, and mothers continue to experience greater conflicts between their work and family lives than do fathers.

Women – regardless of whether or not they have children – report higher levels of stress and depression than do men, and mothers report higher levels of stress and depression than women without children. Parental status has little effect on reported stress and depression levels among men.

In the study, parents were asked if they had too much to do. Mothers were the most likely to report that this was the case – and this increased between 1991 and 2001. While fathers reported this less often than mothers in 2001, the proportion doing so has increased substantially since 1991. Working mothers were more likely to report that family demands got in the way of work, while men were more likely to report that work got in the way of family.

Unlike fatherhood, motherhood seems to be associated with increased stress and decreased life satisfaction. Being a father appears to be linked to increased life satisfaction, while mothers appear to be less satisfied with their lives than are women without children. These differences have persisted from 1991 to 2001. In both years, men and women agreed that the mother had primary responsibility for child care. The differences in stress levels and life satisfaction suggest that the role of working mothers is qualitatively different from that of working fathers, and there is a negative effect on mothers. ◆

WORK AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES, 1991 & 2001

Role Overload: Too much to do	High role overload (%)	
	1991	2001
Father	45	55
Man, no children	34	52
Mother	67	74
Woman, no children	42	54
Work Gets in the Way of Family	**High conflict (%)**	
	1991	2001
Father	30	35
Man, no children	20	32
Mother	40	30
Woman, no children	22	30
Family Demands Interfere with Work	**Medium and high conflict (%)**	
	1991	2001
Father	37	47
Man, no children	22	27
Mother	44	54
Woman, no children	21	30

Source: Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins. Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium: Where Are We? Where Do We Need to Go? Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2001

PARENTS AND TEENS TOGETHER

As young teens undergo physical changes and move towards independence, their relationships with their parents necessarily change. Spending time with them can be a challenge, yet it is an important ingredient of supportive parenting. And positive parenting approaches remain important. The majority of parents eat with their teens regularly, do family chores or projects together, and go on outings, and these proportions have increased between 1996 and 1998. However, parents are less likely to spend time with their teens as they get older. ◆

PARENTS AND TEENS DOING THINGS TOGETHER

	1996	1998
Eat together at least five days/week		
Aged 12 & 13	89%	86%
Aged 14 & 15	–	81%
Watch TV together at least five days/week		
Aged 12 & 13	52%	45%
Aged 14 & 15	–	41%
Have a discussion at least five times/week		
Aged 12 & 13	63%	67%
Aged 14 & 15	–	62%
Go on family outings at least once/week		
Aged 12 & 13	68%	93%
Aged 14 & 15	–	88%
Do family projects/chores at least once/week		
Aged 12 & 13	80%	92%
Aged 14 & 15	–	90%
Play sports together at least once/week		
Aged 12 & 13	25%	41%
Aged 14 & 15	–	25%

POSITIVE PARENTING WITH TEENS

	1994	1996	1998
My parents praise me often/always			
Aged 10 & 11	75	66	69
Aged 12 & 13	–	59	63
Aged 14 & 15	–	–	61
My parents listen to my ideas/opinions often/always			
Aged 10 & 11	n/a	80	76
Aged 12 & 13	–	75	77
Aged 14 & 15	–	–	69
My parents and I solve problems together often/always			
Aged 10 & 11	n/a	67	67
Aged 12 & 13	–	59	57
Aged 14 & 15	–	–	48

n/a: question wasn't asked of that age group
– : that age group wasn't included in the survey that year
Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from the NLSCY, 1996 & 1998.

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FAMILY EXPENDITURES

In 1999, the average two-parent family with children had expenditures totalling $72,093 per year – an increase of 2% over the previous year ($70,754). Between 1998 and 1999, the most dramatic increase in family expenditures was for education: in 1998, two-parent families with children spent $1,331 on education; by 1999, that figure had increased by 10%, to $1,461. Expenditures on education include such things as textbooks, tuition and school fees, and they have been increasing steadily over the past few years. Between 1996 and 1999, education expenditures for two-parent families with children have increased by 36%.

Health care expenditures also rose between 1998 and 1999. Two-parent families with children spent $1,505 on health care costs in 1999, up 5% from 1998. While there were some significant increases in family expenditures between 1998 and 1999, there were also a few categories where spending was reduced – expenditures on child care and recreation both decreased between 1998 and 1999, but only by 2%. In 1998, two-parent families with children spent an average of $4,186 on recreation, but that figure dropped to $4,089 in 1999.

FAMILY SPENDING ON EDUCATION, 1992 to 1999
Two-parent families with children under age 17

1992	$763
1996	$1,071
1998	$1,331
1999	$1,461

Note: All figures in constant 1999$.

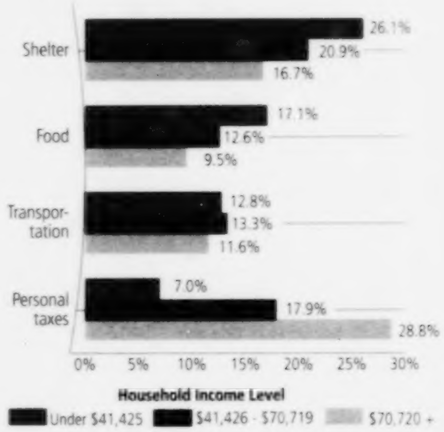
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Survey of Family Expenditures, 1992 & 1996, and Survey of Household Spending, 1998 & 1999.

SPENDING PATTERNS BY LEVEL OF INCOME

All families with children have similar expenditures, but low-income families are forced to spend higher proportions of their household income on the basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing. As a result, they have less money available for things like education and recreation.

In 1999, the largest expenditure for families in the lowest-income range was shelter costs – accounting for 26% of all their household expenditures. Families in the middle-income range spent 21% on shelter, while those in the highest-income range spent only 17% on their shelter costs. Among the lowest-income families, spending on food was the second largest item in their budgets – accounting for 17% of all expenditures. As family incomes increase, the percentage of total expenditures spent on food decreases. ◆

ANNUAL FAMILY EXPENDITURES, BY INCOME LEVEL, 1999
Families with children under age 17



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending, 1999.

Parents have greater difficulty balancing work and family life

WORK AND FAMILY EXPERIENCES, 1991 & 2001

Role Overload: Too much to do	**High role overload (%)**	
	1991	**2001**
Father	45	55
Man, no children	34	52
Mother	67	74
Woman, no children	42	54
Work Gets in the Way of Family	**High conflict (%)**	
	1991	**2001**
Father	30	35
Man, no children	20	32
Mother	40	30
Woman, no children	22	30
Family Demands Interfere with Work	**Medium and high conflict (%)**	
	1991	**2001**
Father	37	47
Man, no children	22	27
Mother	44	54
Woman, no children	21	30

Source: Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins. Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium: Where Are We? Where Do We Need to Go? *Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2001*

The 1990s were a decade of change for working families. According to researchers Linda Duxbury and Chris Higgins, the conflict between work and family life has increased markedly – which means a higher proportion of parents are experiencing greater challenges in balancing their roles as employees, parents, spouses, and elder-care givers. Workers have become more stressed, their physical and mental health has declined, and so has their satisfaction with life.

Despite increased awareness and attention to gender issues, motherhood continues to be more stressful than fatherhood, and mothers continue to experience greater conflicts between their work and family lives than do fathers.

Women – regardless of whether or not they have children – report higher levels of stress and depression than do men, and mothers report higher levels of stress and depression than women without children. Parental status has little effect on reported stress and depression levels among men.

In the study, parents were asked if they had too much to do. Mothers were the most likely to report that this was the case – and this increased between 1991 and 2001. While fathers reported this less often than mothers in 2001, the proportion doing so has increased substantially since 1991. Working mothers were more likely to report that family demands got in the way of work, while men were more likely to report that work got in the way of family.

Unlike fatherhood, motherhood seems to be associated with increased stress and decreased life satisfaction. Being a father appears to be linked to increased life satisfaction, while mothers appear to be less satisfied with their lives than are women without children. These differences have persisted from 1991 to 2001. In both years, men and women agreed that the mother had primary responsibility for child care. The differences in stress levels and life satisfaction suggest that the role of working mothers is qualitatively different from that of working fathers, and there is a negative effect on mothers. ◆

PARENTS AND TEENS TOGETHER

As young teens undergo physical changes and move towards independence, their relationships with their parents necessarily change. Spending time with them can be a challenge, yet it is an important ingredient of supportive parenting. And positive parenting approaches remain important. The majority of parents eat with their teens regularly, do family chores or projects together, and go on outings, and these proportions have increased between 1996 and 1998. However, parents are less likely to spend time with their teens as they get older. ◆

PARENTS AND TEENS DOING THINGS TOGETHER

	1996	**1998**
Eat together at least five days/week		
Aged 12 & 13	89%	86%
Aged 14 & 15	–	81%
Watch TV together at least five days/week		
Aged 12 & 13	52%	45%
Aged 14 & 15	–	41%
Have a discussion at least five times/week		
Aged 12 & 13	63%	67%
Aged 14 & 15	–	62%
Go on family outings at least once/week		
Aged 12 & 13	68%	93%
Aged 14 & 15	–	88%
Do family projects/chores at least once/week		
Aged 12 & 13	80%	92%
Aged 14 & 15	–	90%
Play sports together at least once/week		
Aged 12 & 13	25%	41%
Aged 14 & 15	–	25%

POSITIVE PARENTING WITH TEENS

	1994	**1996**	**1998**
My parents praise me often/always			
Aged 10 & 11	75	66	69
Aged 12 & 13	–	59	63
Aged 14 & 15	–	–	61
My parents listen to my ideas/opinions often/always			
Aged 10 & 11	n/a	80	76
Aged 12 & 13	–	75	77
Aged 14 & 15	–	–	69
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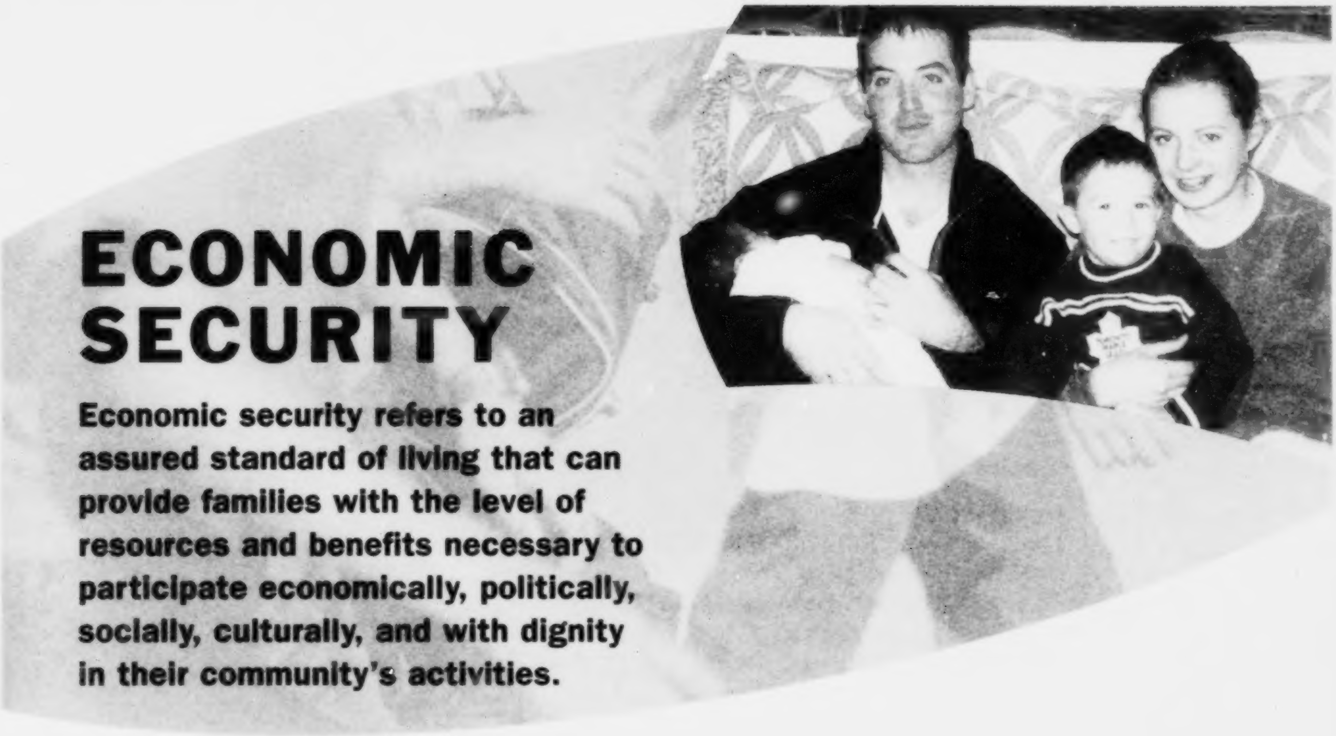

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Economic security refers to an assured standard of living that can provide families with the level of resources and benefits necessary to participate economically, politically, socially, culturally, and with dignity in their community's activities.

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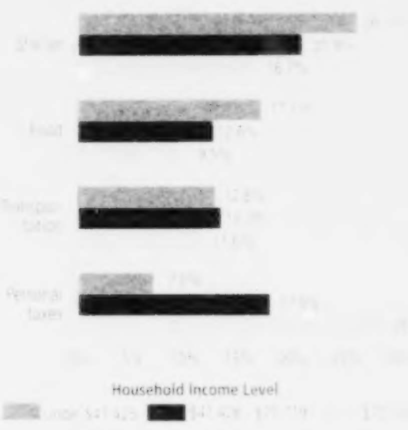

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending, 1999.

Child Poverty in a Decade of Recession and Recovery

In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously passed a resolution to eliminate child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. In the decade that followed, the country experienced an economic recession, then a recovery, but the rate of poverty among children rose over that period – from 15.2% to 18.5%, and the depth of poverty fell very modestly.

The poverty rate indicates how many children are living in poverty as a proportion of all children. The depth of poverty indicates the average amount by which poor families' incomes fall below the poverty line. Both are important measures. We cannot say that real progress is being made if the number of poor children drops, but children living in poverty are becoming even poorer. Nor can there be real progress if the incomes of the poor are improving, but more families are living in poverty.[1]

What proportion of Canadian children are poor?

In 1989, a year of low unemployment, Canada had the lowest rate of child poverty of the following decade – 15.2%. During the subsequent recession, the rate rose to a high of 21.3% in 1993. Economic recovery brought the rate down to 19% in 1998, and to 18.5% by 1999. The rate likely fell again in 2000 because of continuing improvements in the economy (data are not yet available for 2000), but it is highly unlikely that Canada's child poverty rate has returned to its 1989 level.

Lone-parent families headed by women have the highest poverty rates. Their situation improved very slightly, but the rates remain extremely high. In 1999, almost all children in lone-parent families headed by women who had no earnings lived in poverty. Why? Because the social assistance benefits in all provinces are well below the poverty line. And as a result of low wages and insecure work, more than four in 10 children living in female lone-parent families with employment earnings *still* lived in poverty.

For children in two-parent families with only one earner, the situation got significantly worse between 1989 and 1999, as the child poverty rate rose from 19.4% to 26.8%.

How poor are poor children?

Many poor families with children have incomes well below the poverty line. The depth of poverty improved very modestly between 1989 and 1999 for both lone-parent and two-parent families. For all two-parent families, the depth of poverty fell by 2.5% – from $8,936 to $8,712 – and for all lone-parent families headed by women, it fell by 3.6% – from $8,776 to $8,459.

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CHILD POVERTY RATE AND DEPTH OF POVERTY, 1989 to 1999

Characteristics	1989	1993	1998	1999
		Rate (%)		
All children	15.2	21.3	19.0	18.5
Two-parent families	8.6	12.2	10.7	10.4
No earners	90.4	88.4	86.5	86.2
One earner	19.4	24.4	26.0	26.8
Two earners	5.8	7.1	6.4	5.9
Female lone-parent families	52.9	59.0	52.4	51.8
No earner	95.2	92.3	94.1	97.7
One earner	43.9	45.4	43.0	42.3
		Depth ($ below LICO)		
Two-parent families	$8,936	$9,060	$9,044	$8,712
No earners	$12,414	$12,686	$14,306	$13,303
One earner	$8,891	$8,959	$9,143	$8,276
Two earners	$7,824	$7,203	$6,197	$7,128
Female lone-parent families	$8,776	$8,629	$8,917	$8,459
No earner	$10,132	$9,402	$11,108	$10,317
One earner	$7,706	$7,805	$7,260	$6,941

Note: Poverty is measured using the pre-tax LICO (1992 base).
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Income Trends in Canada, *CD-Rom, 2001.*

For families with no earners, the depth of poverty worsened over the decade, reflecting cutbacks in social assistance benefits. Families with earnings saw a reduction in their depth of poverty between 1993 and 1999, primarily as a result of improvements in the job market and modest increases in federal child benefits for working families with children.

CHILD POVERTY RATE, BY PROVINCE, 1989 to 1999

	1989	1993	1999
NFLD	19.8%	21.8%	25.7%
PEI	12.5%	11.4%	17.3%
NS	16.1%	23.4%	18.1%
NB	17.9%	18.0%	18.0%
QC	16.3%	21.3%	21.6%
ON	11.5%	20.8%	16.5%
MB	22.6%	26.1%	23.7%
SK	21.9%	24.8%	17.9%
AB	19.1%	20.6%	16.3%
BC	14.6%	21.5%	19.0%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Income Trends in Canada, *CD-Rom, 2001.*

Between 1989 and 1999, the child poverty rate rose in all provinces except Saskatchewan and Alberta. During the economic recovery period from 1993 to 1999, the child poverty rate fell in six of the 10 provinces. Saskatchewan saw the greatest decrease in their child poverty rate, from 24.8% to 17.9%.[2]

DEPTH OF CHILD POVERTY, BY PROVINCE, 1989 & 1999

	Two-parent families		Lone-parent families	
	1989	1999	1989	1999
NFLD	$8,026	$8,051	$9,725	$7,060
PEI	na	$4,734	na	na
NS	$6,546	$6,855	$7,103	$7,801
NB	$7,238	$7,343	$7,710	$6,469
QC	$8,213	$8,780	$9,361	$8,724
ON	$9,160	$8,520	$7,494	$8,872
MB	$8,889	$9,830	$10,542	$8,993
SK	$7,950	$6,151	$9,243	$6,810
AB	$11,306	$10,001	$9,582	$8,850
BC	$9,366	$9,159	$8,679	$8,148

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Income Trends in Canada, *CD-Rom, 2001.*

There were also differences in the depth of poverty among the provinces. For two-parent families, the situation was most severe in Alberta and Manitoba, and less pronounced in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. Among lone-parent families, the depth of poverty was deepest in Manitoba and Ontario, and less pronounced in New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.

Which provinces have done best?

The question is often asked: which provinces are doing the best job at fighting child poverty?

The incidence and depth of child poverty in a given province are determined by a complex mix of factors. These include: the state of the provincial economy and the provincial job market; the proportion of lone-parent families; the proportion of children in families at high risk of poverty, such as Aboriginal children and recent immigrants; the distribution of children between urban and rural areas; provincial income security programs; and federal and provincial efforts to help working-poor parents get better jobs by making training programs and supports like child care available.

Provincial government policies probably have only a limited impact on the rate of child poverty, compared to the effects of federal programs and the overall economic conditions, but they have a more direct impact on the depth of child poverty. In provinces with strong economic growth over the 1990s – notably Alberta and Ontario – the child poverty rate has fallen to the lowest levels in Canada, but the depth of poverty in both provinces is worse than average. This almost certainly reflects the fact that both Alberta and Ontario cut their provincial social assistance rates significantly more than did other provinces in the 1990s. ◆

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[1] *Poverty is defined here by Statistics Canada's pre-tax Low Income Cut-off or LICO line, which takes into account the size of the family and the community in which the family lives. In 1999, the LICO line was $33,658 for a family of four in a large urban centre and $27,805 for a family of three.*

[2] *The LICO is adjusted for the size of the community in which a family lives, but it does not capture differences in the cost of living between cities of the same size, nor between provinces. Given that rents rose much more than average in large Ontario cities in the late 1990s, the LICO measure understates poverty in Ontario and overstates it in Quebec to some degree.*

INCOME GAPS AND CHANGING NEEDS IN THE CITY OF TORONTO: THE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

In the 1990s, Toronto experienced economic, social, and political changes that had a direct impact on the welfare of its citizens. The decade began with a recession, and while it ended with a strong economic recovery, there were disturbing signs that many Torontonians were not sharing in the economic boom. They were actually falling further behind.

In mid-decade, governments began to chip away at the social safety net, reducing income security benefits and withdrawing from social programs like social housing. By the end of the decade, the distress among Toronto's most vulnerable citizens was evident everywhere – in growing numbers of people living on the streets, in rising eviction rates and the use of emergency shelters, and in hopelessly long waiting lists for assisted housing. The decade was also marked by significant structural changes at the provincial and municipal levels, with the costs of housing, child care, and public transit downloaded from the province to an already cash-strapped municipal City government.

WHAT HAS THIS MEANT FOR TORONTO'S CHILDREN?

In 1999, almost one in three children (32.2%) in the city lived in low income, up from 30.8% in 1995. By comparison, the rate for all Canadian children was 19%. The low-income rate for lone-parent families in Toronto rose by 2.6% between 1995 and 1999, while in Canada it fell. The depth of low income in Toronto also got worse over that period. The median income of lone-parent families with one child was 29.2% below the Low Income Cut-off (LICO) measure in 1995; by 1999, it was a staggering 43.2% below the LICO!

Between 1990 and 1999, lone-parent families in Toronto experienced a whopping 18% decline in their already low incomes – from $29,000 to $24,600. This drop was significantly greater than the 4% decline for single parents in all of Canada (from $24,500 to $23,400). Income from employment for lone parents in Toronto rose by 5% over the economic recovery period from 1995 to 1999, but reduced government transfers negated any gains from employment and decreased the overall income of lone parents over the 1990s.

During CCSD consultations with community residents and service providers in Toronto, they described the dire impact that these trends were having on young people. Many cited mounting alienation among youth and a serious lack of programs and services for them. Recreational programs and facilities are lacking, excessive policing has exacerbated tensions with members of minority groups, and many youth in the community have become victims of violence. Barriers to employment for these young people are high and rising. There are few employment programs, and the schools do not have sufficient resources to meet the needs of the marginalized youth. ◆

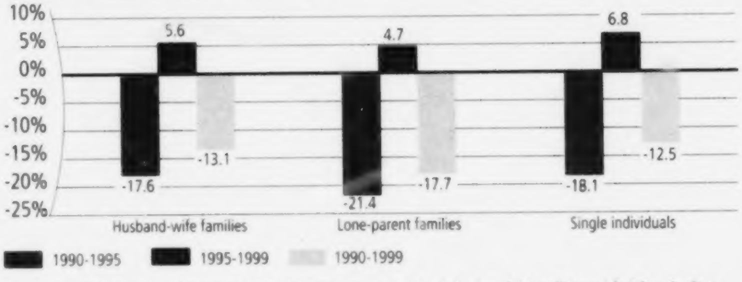
Voices:

"There is nothing for young people to do so they hang out in the mall."

"There is a technology gap – there are jobs requiring higher training, but these kids don't have access to computers. Many kids are dropping out."

"There is too much emphasis on university and college, and not enough on trades or apprenticeships. Even so, the level of education needed for these apprenticeships has increased, shutting the door on many."

INCOME ROLLER COASTER IN THE CITY OF TORONTO, BY FAMILY TYPE
Change in median total income (%)



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Small Areas Administrative Data, 1990, 1995 & 1999.

The Rich Get Richer: The distribution of wealth among families with children, 1984-1999

As regularly reported in *The Progress of Canada's Children*, the distribution of income among families with children has become more and more unequal over the 1990s. With the release of data from the new Survey of Financial Security for 1999, we have learned two key things about the distribution of wealth.

First, the distribution of wealth is much more unequal than the distribution of income. Second, the distribution of wealth has become even more unequal over the past 15 years.

Wealth is defined as the assets of a family, minus its debts. Assets include houses, cars, equity in a business, and financial assets such as stocks and bonds, mutual funds and RRSPs. Debts include credit card and consumer debt, mortgages and student loans.

In 1999, the wealthiest 10% of all families owned 56% of all family wealth, up from 52% in 1984. The bottom 20% of families had no net wealth at all, meaning that their debts were greater than their assets.

What about families with children? The bottom 20% of couples with children had no net wealth at all, while the top 20% had an average wealth of more than $700,527. (This second figure will strike many as very high. It reflects the fact that the very wealthiest families drive up the average for the top 20%.)

Between 1984 and 1999, the wealth of the top 20% of couples with children rose by 43%, and the next richest 20% saw their wealth increase by 21%. Among the middle 20% of couples, their wealth grew by just 3%, and the bottom 40% experienced a significant decline in their net wealth. Clearly, the gap between the bottom and the top has widened considerably.

The average wealth of all couples with children rose by 31.2% between 1984 and 1999, from $149,293 to $195,922. However, this rise in the average was entirely the result of the enormous increase in wealth among the very richest families. The "median" couple with children – that is, the family at the exact midpoint of the wealth scale – did not prosper. Their net wealth actually fell slightly, from $77,856 to $77,800.

Large differences in wealth among families can translate into huge gaps in opportunities for their children. It can mean that fewer parents are able to help their children with the rising costs of post-secondary education or to purchase a home or start a business. ◆

THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH, 1984 to 1999
Couples with children under age 18

	Average Net Worth (constant 1999$)		
	1984	1999	% Change
Quintile			
1st (poorest)	$65	-$3,275	-51.4
2nd	$34,849	$29,819	-14.4
3rd	$77,853	$80,498	3.4
4th	$140,961	$170,174	20.7
5th (wealthiest)	$493,015	$703,527	42.7

Source: Rene Morissette, X. Zhang and M. Drolet, The Evolution of Wealth Inequality in Canada, 1984-99, Statistics Canada, 2002.

THE COSTS OF RAISING A CHILD

The costs of raising children in Canada are high, but they have decreased somewhat since 1998. In 2001, the cost of raising a child from birth to age 18 was estimated to be $155,000 – down by 9.7% from 1998 (in constant 2001$). The largest portion of this cost was for child care – at 35% – and this proportion has increased since 1998. The next largest expenditure was for shelter costs, at 23%. ◆

ESTIMATED COSTS OF RAISING A CHILD TO AGE 18

	1995		1998		2001	
Child care	$58,100	34%	$55,800	33%	$54,400	35%
Shelter, furnishings, household needs	$39,100	23%	$39,700	23%	$35,700	23%
Food	$31,100	18%	$32,500	19%	$23,400	15%
Clothing	$18,300	11%	$17,100	10%	$15,500	10%
Recreation, books, gifts, school	$14,500	8%	$14,400	8%	$15,700	10%
Health care	$5,100	3%	$5,500	3%	$4,300	3%
Personal care	$2,900	2%	$2,900	2%	$2,800	2%
Transportation	$2,900	2%	$3,100	2%	$3,600	2%
	$172,000	**100%**	**$171,000**	**100%**	**$155,400**	**100%**

Source: Manitoba Agriculture and Food, "The Cost of Raising a Child," in Family Finance, *1995, 1998 & 2001.*

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Food	$31,100	18%	$32,500	19%	$23,400	15%
Clothing	$18,300	11%	$17,100	10%	$15,500	10%
Recreation, books, gifts, school	$14,500	8%	$14,400	8%	$15,700	10%
Health care	$5,100	3%	$5,500	3%	$4,300	3%
Personal care	$2,900	2%	$2,900	2%	$2,800	2%
Transportation	$2,900	2%	$3,100	2%	$3,600	2%
	$172,000	100%	$171,000	100%	$155,400	100%

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Economic Security and Social Inclusion

Children living in poverty are less likely to participate fully in areas of life that are most critical to their healthy growth and development. And given that poor children are more likely to suffer exclusion in Canadian society, it is very worrisome that rich children in Canada are becoming richer, while poor children are consistently losing ground.

According to the NLSCY, close to one in three children was poor at least once in 1994, 1996 and 1998, and about one in 10 was consistently poor over those three years. The children who lived in persistent poverty were less likely to be included in all the important aspects of society that are critical to their healthy growth and development – strong, healthy families; positive school experiences; positive peer relationships; and good health.

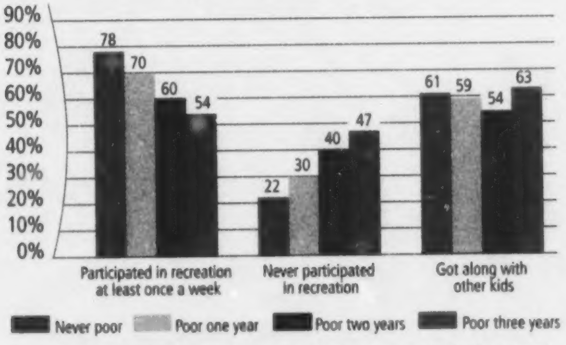
Effects of persistant poverty

Strong, healthy families are an important part of a child's life, and when children live in persistent poverty, they are less likely to have this support. For example, one in five children who were poor in 1994, 1996 and 1998 lived with a depressed parent, whereas this was true of only 6% of children who were never poor!

Twice as many children who were persistently poor lived in "dysfunctional" families compared with those who were never poor – 21% and 10%, respectively. And almost twice as many children living in persistent poverty lived with violence compared to those who were never poor (14% and 8%, respectively).

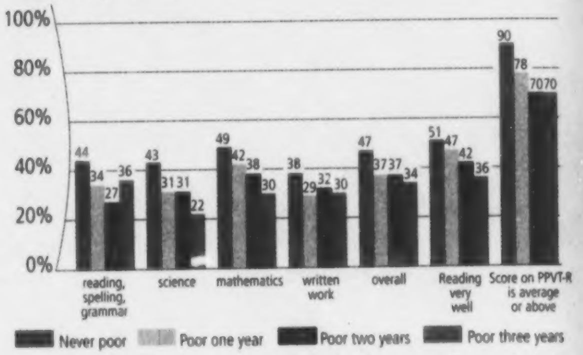
Participation in recreation is another important part of a child's life. Approximately three-quarters (72%) of all children participated in recreation at least once a week in 1998 – but not if the child was consistently poor. Among children who were never poor over the three survey years (1994, 1996, and 1998), 78% had participated in recreation; among children who were poor all three years, just over half did so.

POOR CHILDREN AND RECREATION



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, 1998.

POOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS
Doing very well in:



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, 1998.

The only area in which children living in persistent poverty fared almost as well as other children who had never been poor or were seldom poor was in getting along with other kids.

Children living in persistent poverty have a less positive and less successful school life. Examining all measures of a child's academic performance – their reading, writing, math, and science – children who were never poor did better than those who were persistently poor. Young children (4- and 5-year-olds) who were persistently poor scored lower on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (which assesses a child's verbal ability and scholastic aptitude) than did their peers who were never poor.

Children who were persistently poor or sometimes poor also had less favourable mental health outcomes than did children who were never poor. They were more likely to have emotional and anxiety problems, aggressive behavioural problems, and hyperactivity. They were involved in illegal activities more often than their non-poor counterparts.

A growing gap

What is particularly troublesome about all of these indicators of social exclusion and their relationship to poor children in Canada is that, throughout the 1990s, the poor became poorer while the rich got richer – forcing these children even further away from full participation in society.

Not only is there a growing gulf between the highest- and lowest-income families, but the wealthiest households are growing away from those in the middle. Between 1993 and 1999, families in the lowest 10% of the income scale actually lost ground in their average income – by $33, or under 1% – while families with incomes in the highest 10% of the scale gained a whopping 21% in their average total income! Among middle-income families, there was a modest growth of 4-6%, probably enough to cover basic human needs. ◆

PHYSICAL SAFETY

Physical safety refers to the quality of children's natural and built environments and the threats to their personal safety and well-being.

THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE, CHILDREN'S HEALTH, and THE ENVIRONMENT

by Sandra Schwartz, Manager, Child Health Programme, Pollution Probe

Safeguarding human and environmental health from exposure to harmful levels of toxic substances is one of the most important obligations of Canadian public authorities. But the majority of substances in use in Canada today have not been adequately assessed for their risks to children.

Decisions are generally made using a risk-based model which relies on a range of assumptions, including how susceptible humans are to various contaminants. Not only have many substances in commercial use never been evaluated, but regulations for most environmental contaminants, pesticides and other toxic substances were based on protecting the health of the average adult. Children's unique exposures and risks were not explicitly considered. Although the evaluation of new substances and the re-evaluation of old ones is now supposed to take children's differences into account, it is questionable whether this is done adequately.

Children are not just small adults. They have special developmental, behavioural and physiological characteristics that make them more vulnerable to various exposures. From conception on, the fetus, infant, child, and adolescent are all in dynamic states of growth, with their nervous, respiratory, immune, hormone and reproductive systems in various states of development. This growth and development includes critical stages or "windows of vulnerability." Toxic exposures that occur during these critical stages, either in utero or during childhood, can alter or permanently damage these developing systems.

While the special susceptibility of children to environmental hazards is now widely recognized and more research is being conducted, much uncertainty remains. The proportion of Canada's children affected by environmental exposures is not known. For the most part, there is a lack of conclusive evidence of direct causal links between environmental contaminants and human health, particularly for health problems that may result from multiple low levels of exposure. Health problems may occur after long latency periods and have no features to identify them as caused by specific factors in the environment.

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Air Quality and Children

Children are more vulnerable than adults to pollutants in our air. Because they breathe more rapidly than adults and inhale more air per breath, children tend to be more exposed to air pollution. They spend more time outdoors being physically active and they are lower to the ground than adults, so they are exposed to more vehicle exhausts and the heavier pollutants that concentrate at lower levels. Children are also highly exposed to indoor air contaminants, as they spend up to 80% of their time inside.

Children are also at greater risk from air pollution because of the very nature of their development. Their lungs and airways are immature and especially susceptible, with a large surface area through which pollutants can be easily absorbed.

Despite improvements in air quality, pollution significantly affects the respiratory health of Canadians. Both indoor and outdoor air quality contribute substantially to respiratory problems in children. Health-care providers see more children with respiratory problems than with any other chronic health problem, and respiratory difficulties are the most common reason that young children are hospitalized.

What are children exposed to?

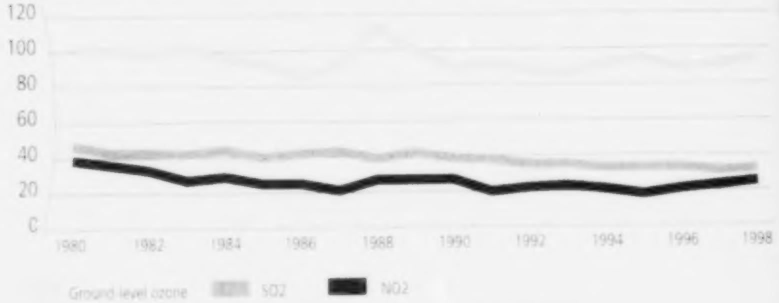
Among the major substances harmful to a child's developing respiratory system are indoor air contaminants such as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), combustion products, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), biological compounds, and allergens. There are also pollutants in the outdoor air in Canada at levels of concern, including particulates, ground-level ozone, sulfur dioxide, and oxides of nitrogen (NOx).

What are the effects?

The effects on children vary from subtle symptoms such as a sore throat, to coughing and wheezing, increased rates of asthma attacks, more physician and hospital visits or admissions, permanent reduction in lung capacity, and an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

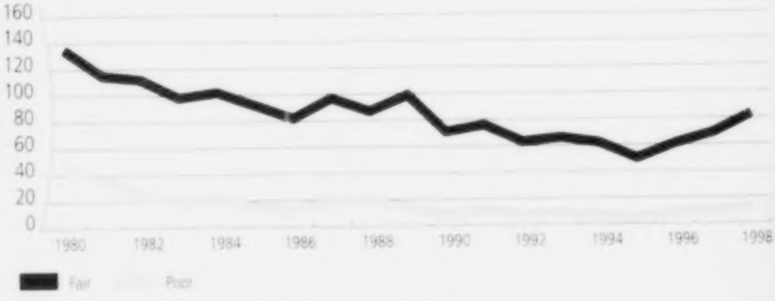
Ozone and particulates in the air are responsible for tangible increases in respiratory illnesses. Long-term exposure to high levels of air pollutants is associated with significant detrimental effects on lung functioning and may predispose children to chronic respiratory problems. Indoor air pollutants also contribute to persistent or recurrent respiratory symptoms, infections and allergies. Certain biological allergens are the suspected cause of asthma, and many others will trigger or worsen asthmatic attacks. ◆

POLLUTION IN CANADA'S ATMOSPHERE, 1980-1998
Ground-level ozone, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide in the atmosphere



Source: Environment Canada, Air Quality Information System, Environmental Protection Service.

CANADA'S AIR QUALITY, 1980-1998
Number of days of fair and poor air quality



Source: Environment Canada, Tracking Key Environmental Issues, 1999.

PESTICIDES

Last June, in a landmark decision, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of the town of Hudson, Quebec, asserting the town's right to legislate pesticide use within municipal boundaries. The little town's pesticide-banning bylaws – a Canadian first in 1991 – were challenged by chemical pesticide companies at every level of the court system over the last 10 years. Hudson's victory sent a reassuring signal to the ever-growing number of Canadian municipalities that have chosen to follow Hudson's lead by instituting partial or total bans on the use of chemical pesticides within city limits.

People worried by the mounting scientific evidence about potential harm to children from pesticide compounds also applauded the court decision. Recent studies have linked pesticides to leukemia and brain cancer in children, as well as to a host of neurological and developmental disorders.

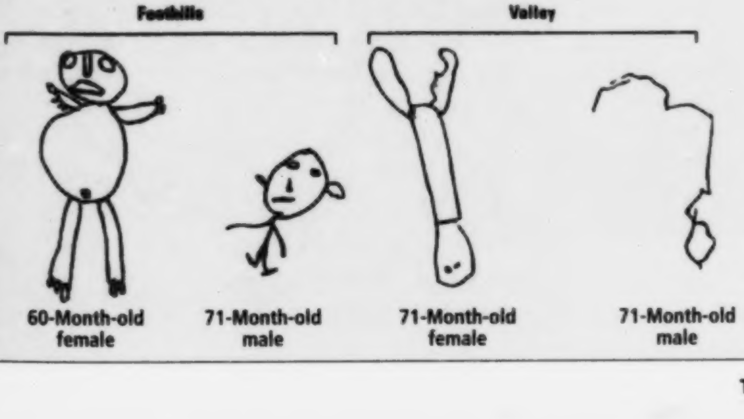
This spring, Canada's Health Minister, Anne McLellan, introduced a bill to bring about a long-overdue modernization of Canada's pesticide regulation framework. While reactions to the bill have been mixed, the legislation signals some awareness of the magnitude of the problem on behalf of the federal government.

Meanwhile, Hudson's success in setting its own rules for dealing with pesticides continues to inspire other municipalities and concerned organizations. Taking the Supreme Court's recent decision into account, the Sierra Club of Canada has drafted region-specific sample bylaws for municipalities across Canada. Think about it – your community could be Canada's next pesticide-free zone. ◆

For more information, visit the Sierra Club of Canada: http://www.sierraclub.ca/

Disturbing Picture

In Mexico's Yaqui Valley, farmers spray their crops with pesticides as often as 45 times per crop cycle and farm families tend to use household bug sprays daily. University of Arizona anthropologist Elizabeth A. Guillette tested children from these farms and children from the foothills, where pesticides are seldom used. Drawing ability was only one area in which she found evidence of significant developmental differences. (For more information, see http://ehpnet1.niehs.nih.gov/docs/1998/106p347-353guillette/abstract.html.)



Asthma in Children and Youth

Childhood asthma is now the most common chronic childhood illness in both Canada and the U.S. A number of international studies suggest that changes in the environment may be contributing to the increase in childhood asthma.

Asthma is a chronic lung condition that causes difficulty breathing. In 1998-1999, approximately 12% of the children and youth in Canada – more than one million young people – had asthma. Asthma accounts for one-quarter of school absenteeism, and it can affect children in a variety of ways, from very mild symptoms to very severe. Some children living with asthma must restrict their activities and lifestyle in order to prevent the onset of symptoms.

In previous issues of *Progress*, we have documented the increasing rates of asthma among children and youth under age 20. Between 1978 and the mid-1990s, there was a six-fold increase – from 2% to more than 12%! Over the second half of the 1990s, the rate appears to have levelled off among young people under 20, but there was an increase among young adults aged 20 to 24.

Among younger children under 15, boys are more likely than girls to have asthma. Among teens, girls are more likely than boys to have asthma, and by the young adult years, the rates are equal. ◆

CHILDHOOD CANCERS

Cancer is the second most common cause of death among children older than age 1. On average, more than 1,260 Canadian children were diagnosed with cancer every year in the mid-1990s, with leukemia being the most common type.

The debate continues about whether or not childhood cancer is increasing in North America. Some sources suggest that there has been a 25% increase in incidence over the last 25 years, and many health professionals believe this figure is accurate. However, others suggest that the numbers have levelled off since the 1980s, and that the increases reflect improved detection methods.

Canadian data on childhood cancer provide an ambiguous picture. We can say that the incidence of childhood cancer is apparently not declining, and that there are now more survivors of childhood cancer, but there are concerns that radiation therapy predisposes these children to further cancers as adults.

Cancer in childhood is different than in adults, and the cancers are caused by different mechanisms and exposures. Because children don't have the lifestyle choices that increase an adult's risk of cancer, most childhood cancer is likely explained by involuntary exposures to environmental agents. It is now believed that exposures while still in utero or during infancy represent a substantial, largely preventable, cause of cancer in children.

In the vast majority of cases of childhood cancers, the precise cause is not known. It is also very difficult to study cancer in children because the numbers afflicted are relatively (and thankfully) small.

Known or suspected substances linked to cancer in children include:

- some medications (such as diethylstilbestrol)
- chemotherapeutic drugs
- ionizing radiation
- certain industrial and agricultural chemicals (such as organic solvents, nitrosamines, some pesticides).

As well, childhood exposures to the following substances are likely to increase their risks of developing certain cancers in adulthood:

- environmental tobacco smoke (ETS)
- asbestos
- ultraviolet radiation
- persistent organic pollutants.

Between 1992 and 1996, there were 6,330 new cases of children with cancer in Canada – and almost 250 died each year. Leukemia accounted for 26% of all new childhood cancer cases and resulted in 32% of deaths due to cancer in children. Cancers involving the brain and spinal cord resulted in 24% of all childhood cancer deaths, the second highest death rate. ◆

Recycling in Canada: How much garbage do we have?

Canada produces 21 million tons of garbage every year, according to Statistics Canada, and we are among the top five countries in the world for the amount of waste that each person generates.

What does our garbage consist of?

- 30% is paper and paper products
- 34% is food and garden waste
- 11% is plastics
- 15% is glass and metals
- 10% is textiles and miscellaneous materials.

However, we are making a difference with recycling. In 1999, 42% of all paper consumed by Canadians was recycled into newspaper products. For each ton of newspaper recycled, 17 trees are saved.

According to the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, Canadian mills successfully transformed a record 5.2 million tons of recovered paper into new container board, boxboard, other grades of paper, communication, kraft and sanitary papers, and building materials. In Ontario today, over 3.8 million households have access to curbside, multi-material blue box collections.

Among the 29 countries with advanced economies, these are the "Most Wasteful":

- United States: 720 kg of trash/person
- Canada: 675 kg of trash/person
- Norway: 630 kg of trash/person
- Mexico: 300 kg of trash/person ◆

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

There are gases in the air that surround the planet. Called "greenhouse gases," they act like a greenhouse by holding in the heat. Without these gases, the temperature on earth would drop from an average of 15 C to -18 C. Greenhouse gases are created naturally on earth – through water vapour that produces clouds and rainfall, carbon dioxide that we exhale when we breathe, or methane gas created by microorganisms living in the stomachs of cows and in swamps.

About 150 years ago, we began to burn more fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas) to power and heat our factories, ships, trucks, cars, and homes. Burning these fuels releases billions of extra tons of greenhouse gases every year. It's like throwing an extra blanket on the bed – more heat is trapped in and warms our planet, causing our climate to change. And in turn, this affects our weather.

Average temperatures in Canada are already rising. Scientists predict that over the next century, Canada will be 1.5 C to 5 C warmer in the south and as much as 5 to 7 C warmer in the north. Even a small increase in the average yearly temperature could have serious consequences.

Scientific projections indicate that climate change could affect the health and well-being of Canadians, both directly and indirectly. There are two types of direct health effects: those caused by projected higher temperatures, such as increases in illnesses and deaths from heat stroke and dehydration, and injuries, illnesses and deaths caused by projected increases in extreme weather events, such as tornadoes, floods and winter storms.

Climate change could also have significant indirect health effects. It could spread infectious diseases such as malaria, dengue and yellow fever, as insects carrying diseases migrate northward into the Canadian climate. There is also potential for increased illness related to air pollution. The use of fossil fuels produces two main greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide and methane – neither of which directly cause air pollution. But fossil fuel use also produces other by-products which do cause air pollution – like smog – and rising temperatures could magnify the effects of pollutants already in the air.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change because their bodies and minds are still developing, and they are physically and mentally less able to cope with the effects of these climate changes. Climate change could affect children's health in the following ways:

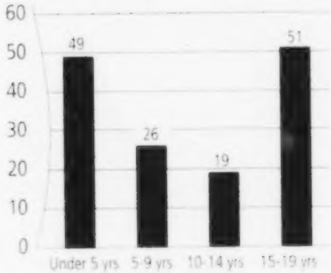
- an increase in climatic disasters, such as storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and droughts;
- a greater chance of heat stress and dehydration – children are less able to regulate their body temperature and do not recognize the warning signs;
- worsening air pollution in large urban areas from longer and more intense heat waves could cause respiratory problems;
- heavy rains and flooding could result in contamination of drinking and recreational waters. ◆

Children and Farm Safety

Farming is one of the most hazardous occupations in Canada. Families living on farms have long understood the many dangers associated with farm living. Children and youth who live on farms are one of the high-risk groups prone to injuries and death.

Unlike most families, children living on farms are directly exposed to their family's occupation on a daily basis. As a result, they live in a much riskier environment than most children, and the youngest children and teens are at the greatest risk. The risk to teenagers increases because they are most likely to participate directly in farm activities.

WORK-RELATED FARM DEATHS, BY CHILD'S AGE, 1990-1998



Source: Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, Fatal Farm Injuries in Canada 1990 to 1998.

Over the past nine years, 94 children under the age of 15 have died as a result of farm injuries, and 52% of those children were under the age of 5.

Children die on farms from different causes, but most often, they are victims of a "blind run-over." A typical scenario might involve a toddler playing on a gravel driveway leading to the barn. While Dad is doing the haying, Mom is in the barn feeding livestock. A sister watching the toddler goes to get him a drink of water and while she's gone, he crawls under the wagon attached to an idling tractor. When the tractor moves, the child is crushed.

Children under the age of 5 are at the greatest risk of being killed in this way. From 1990 to 1998, there were 37 deaths in Canada caused by blind run-over, and children under the age of 5 accounted for 82% of those fatalities.

Ontario has the most child farm fatalities of all the provinces. Between 1990 and 1998, 33 children under the age of 15 died from farm-related accidents in Ontario. Saskatchewan was next with 19 deaths, and Alberta had 17 child fatalities.

Socio-economic factors are closely linked to the risk of childhood injuries or deaths on farms, and a lack of resources for child care services remains a critical problem for many farm parents. ◆

THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE, CHILDREN'S HEALTH, and THE ENVIRONMENT

(continued from page 21)

Waiting for scientific certainty or absolute proof of association must not be a reason for inaction. We need to apply something called the "precautionary principle," commonly defined as: "when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically."

Inherent in that definition is the notion of preventing the impacts of pollution on future generations, and the concept of "duty to act." In this respect, the goal of precaution is to establish research and policies to protect those most vulnerable and those least able to protect themselves. Protecting those who are at greatest risk generally provides health benefits for all in society.

A broad reorganization of both environmental science and policy is required so that we can more effectively anticipate risks and promote cost-effective alternatives to hazardous products and processes. Applying precaution to children's environmental health will require a shift in decision-making towards primary prevention.

As we wrestle with the questions of how much chemical contaminants are contributing to health trends such as increased infertility, learning disabilities, asthma, and cancers, it is important to keep one thing in mind: scientists keep finding significant – often permanent – effects at surprisingly low doses.

Despite scientific uncertainties and the need for more research, Canada must act on the precautionary principle to develop environmental targets through enforceable legislation to protect the health and well-being of all of Canada's children. ◆

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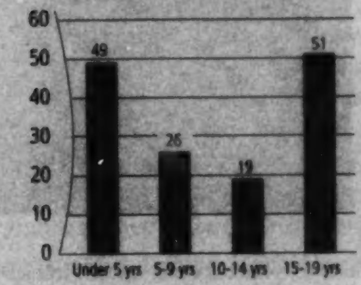

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Safety on the Roads

Throughout the 1990s, motor vehicle mishaps remained a leading cause of injury and death for children and youth. Wearing seat belts and using bicycle helmets are proven ways to save children's lives and prevent serious injury. But how likely is it that young people are buckling up and wearing helmets?

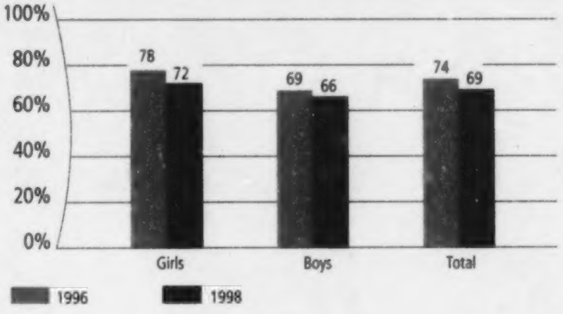
Seat belts

Unfortunately, the use of seat belts is declining. In 1996, 74% of all 12- and 13-year-olds reported that they always used a seatbelt; by 1998, that proportion was down to 69%. Girls were more likely than boys to always use a seat belt (72% compared to 66%). In 1996, young people living in rural areas were less likely than those in urban areas to use seat belts – 59% and 81%, respectively.

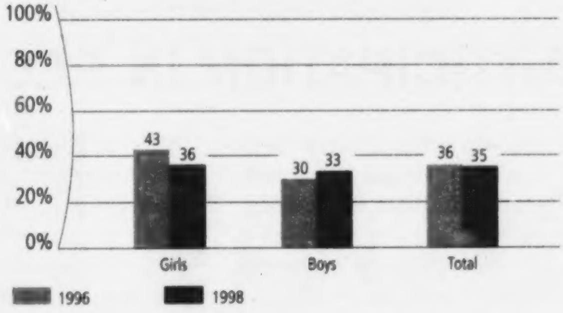
Bicycle helmets

The use of bicycle helmets is also low. In 1998, only 35% of all 12- and 13-year-olds said they always wore a bicycle helmet when cycling. This rate was down very slightly from 1996. Girls were somewhat more likely than boys to always wear a helmet (36% compared to 33%), and youth in low-income families were less likely than those in upper-income families to use helmets all the time. In 1996, young people in rural and small urban areas were less likely to use helmets than were youth in larger urban areas – 30% compared to 40%. ◆

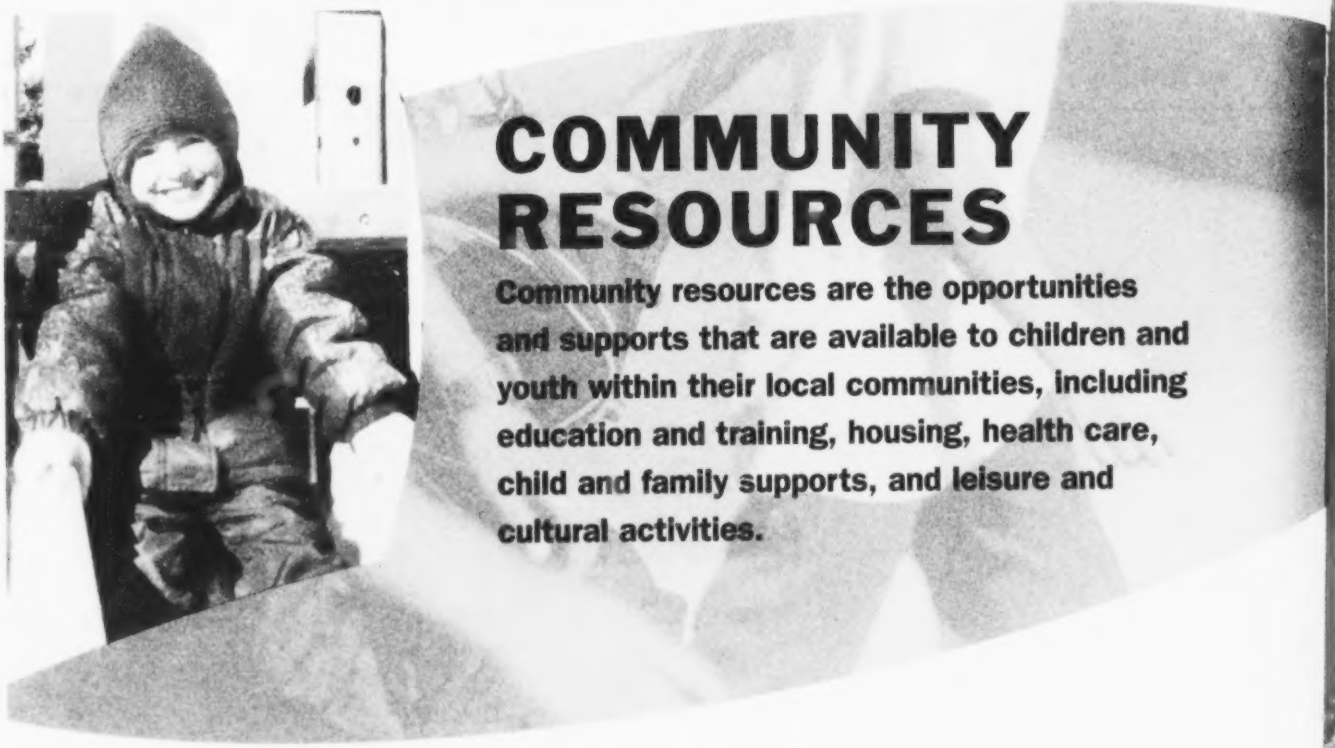
"I ALWAYS USE A SEAT BELT"
Among 12- and 13-year-olds, 1996 & 1998



"I ALWAYS USE A HELMET"
Among 12- and 13-year-olds, 1996 & 1998



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1996 & 1998.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community resources are the opportunities and supports that are available to children and youth within their local communities, including education and training, housing, health care, child and family supports, and leisure and cultural activities.

PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION

As evidence mounts about the benefits of recreation for children and youth, overall participation among young Canadians is declining. The rate of decline is greatest among children in low-income families, who are known to have limited access to organized recreational activities.

EFFECTS OF RECREATION ON EDUCATION

It appears that children who participate regularly in recreation over a sustained period of time have more positive and successful experiences at school.

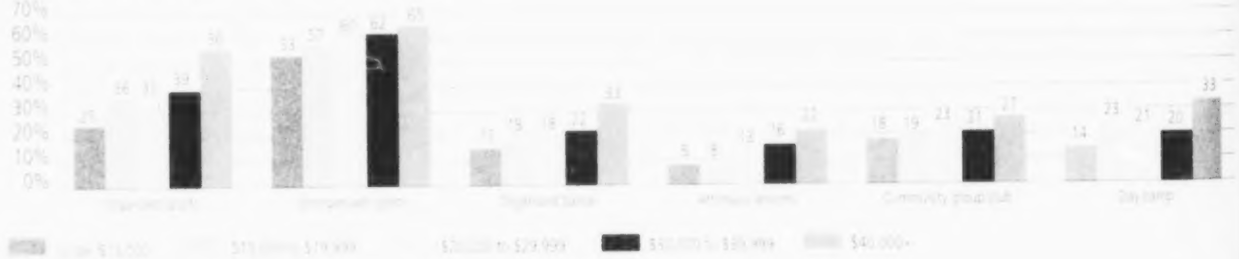
Sixty per cent of the students aged 10 to 15 who had participated in all three NLSCY survey years said they liked school very much or quite a bit, compared to less than 30% of those who had not participated at all. Even participating for only one of the three years was associated with positive feelings about school.

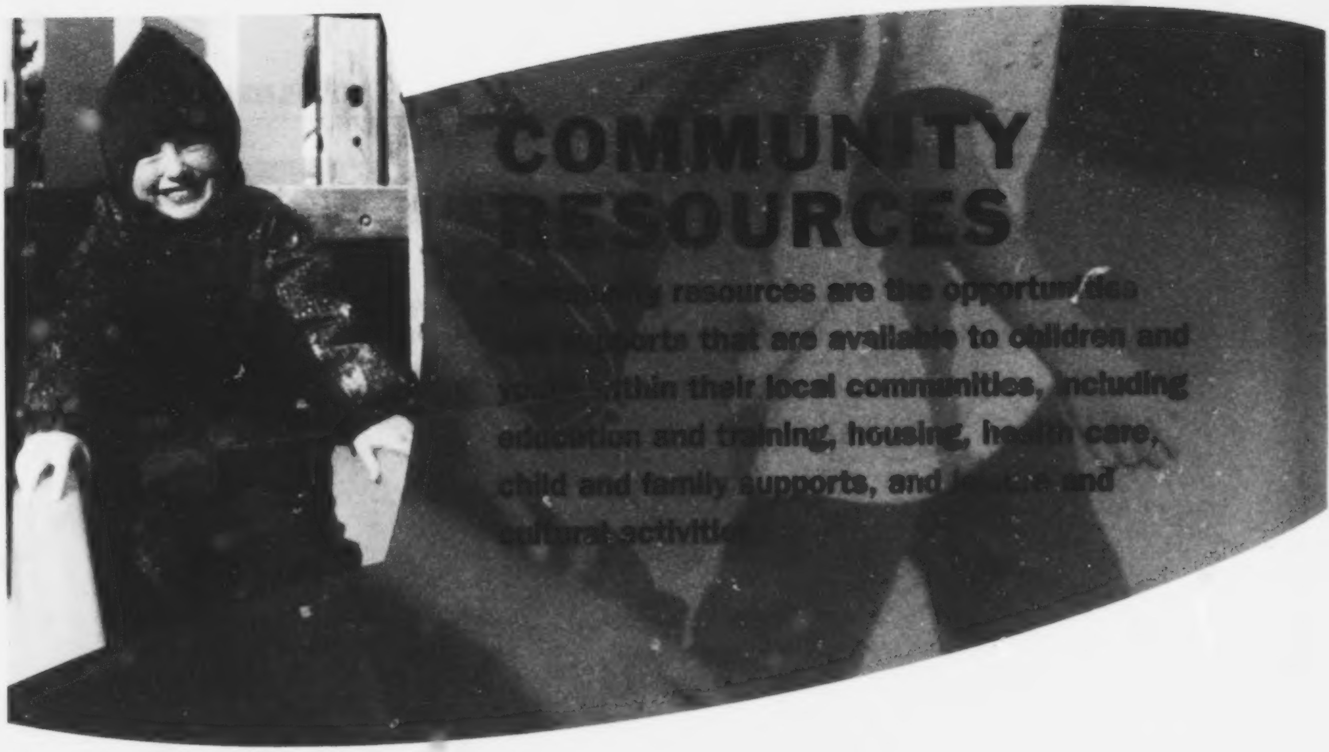
When asked how well they felt they were doing in school, almost three-quarters (72%) of the children aged 10 to 15 who had participated regularly in recreation all three years said they were doing very well or well in school, compared to less than 60% of children who had not participated at all. Among children who had participated in one of the three years, 70% felt they were doing well or very well in school.

When the parents were asked how well their children were doing in school, once again there was a consistent relationship between doing well and sustained participation in recreation.

Children who participated in recreation also scored better on their Reading/English tests. Two-thirds of children aged 10 to 15

PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION, BY FAMILY INCOME, 1998
Child aged 4 to 9 participated at least once a week





COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community resources are the opportunities and supports that are available to children and youth within their local communities, including education and training, housing, health care, child and family supports, and leisure and cultural activities.

PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION

As evidence mounts about the benefits of recreation for children and youth, overall participation among young Canadians is declining. The rate of decline is greatest among children in low-income families, who are known to have limited access to organized recreational activities.

Effects of Recreation on Education

It appears that children who participate regularly in recreation over a sustained period of time have more positive and successful experiences at school.

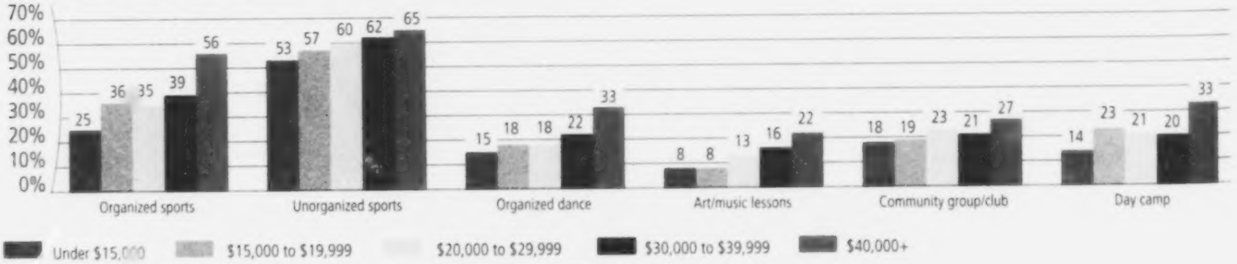
Sixty per cent of the students aged 10 to 15 who had participated in all three NLSCY survey years said they liked school very much or quite a bit, compared to less than 30% of those who had not participated at all. Even participating for only one of the three years was associated with positive feelings about school.

When asked how well they felt they were doing in school, almost three-quarters (72%) of the children aged 10 to 15 who had participated regularly in recreation all three years said they were doing very well or well in school, compared to less than 60% of children who had not participated at all. Among children who had participated in one of the three years, 70% felt they were doing well or very well in school.

When the parents were asked how well their children were doing in school, once again there was a consistent relationship between doing well and sustained participation in recreation.

Children who participated in recreation also scored better on their Reading/English tests. Two-thirds of children aged 10 to 15

PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION, BY FAMILY INCOME, 1998
Child aged 4 to 9 participated at least once a week



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

who regularly participated in recreation in each of the three years scored over 10 on the Reading/English test, compared with 54%* of those who had not participated at all and 56% of those who had participated in one year only.

Participation is also related to self-esteem. In 1998, 16% of youth aged 12 to 15 who had rarely or never participated in sports reported low levels of self-esteem – four times higher than among youth who had always participated. Youth who participated in organized sports regularly over the years were more likely to say that expressing their opinion was important, and they had a more positive outlook about their personal futures over the next five years.

Among teens, participation in activities is related to social skills. Teens who had rarely or never participated in organized sports over the course of the survey were much less likely to see their friends outside of school, and they were more than three times more likely to report having problems with friends.

DECLINING PARTICIPATION AND THE IMPACT OF LOW INCOME

Since 1994, overall participation in all recreational activities has declined among children aged 4 to 9, except for participation in community groups and day camps. The rate of decline has been greater among children in the lowest-income families than among those in the highest-income families.

Among children who were poor in all three years of the survey (1994, 1996 and 1998), less than one-quarter had participated in recreation each year, whereas over half of the children who were never poor had participated.

In 1998, children in higher-income families were far more likely than those in lower-income families to participate in recreation. The gap was much wider for organized sports than for unorganized recreational activities.

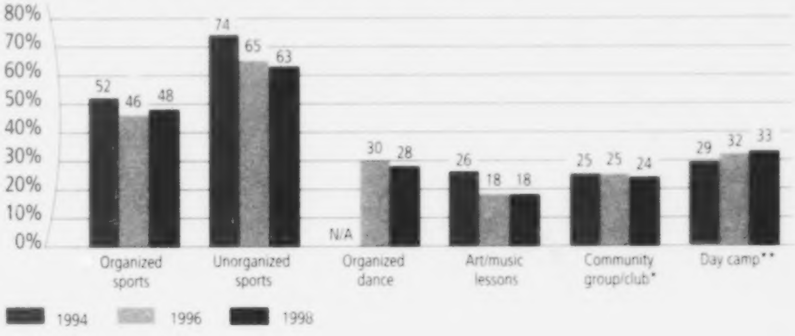
WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE MOST POPULAR?

Children are most likely to participate in "unorganized" sports, followed by organized sports. In both cases, boys are more likely than girls to do so. For example, 53% of boys participated in organized sports at least once a week, compared to 43% of girls.

Among younger children, 26% participated in nursery school activities, 57% were in a preschool/kindergarten, and 25% were in a play group. Children in higher-income families were more likely to attend nursery school, but children in higher- and lower-income families were equally likely to attend preschool/ kindergarten or play groups. ◆

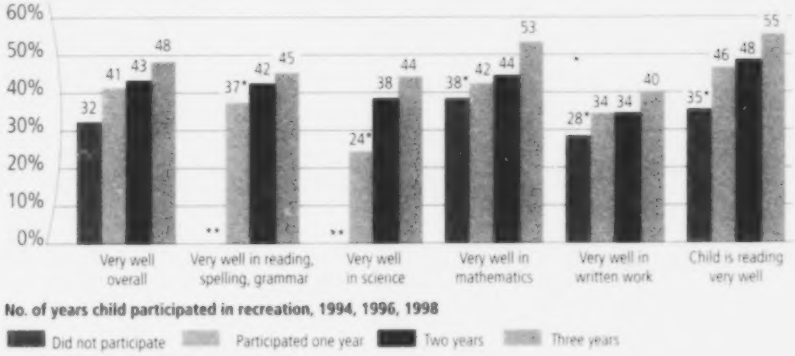
* *Estimates are less reliable due to small sample size*

PARTICIPATION IN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, 1994, 1996 & 1998
Child aged 4 to 9 participated at least once a week



* *Children aged 6 to 9 years*
** *Estimate is less reliable due to small sample size.*

RECREATION AND EDUCATION
How are children aged 10 to 15 doing in school?



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Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996, 1998

Trends in School Enrollment

Public education is a major community resource which society provides for its children. While the vast majority of children are in the public education system (93%), enrollment in private schools has increased.

In 1998/99, there were 5.4 million elementary and secondary students enrolled in Canadian schools, virtually unchanged from 1997/98 (down by 17,000 students, or just 0.6%). Enrollment includes students in public, private, and federal schools, as well as schools for children with visual and hearing impairments.

All Canadian provinces experienced a decrease in public school enrollment except Alberta, where the number of students increased marginally by 0.2%. The decrease in most provinces was very small. The largest decrease was in Newfoundland, where public school enrollment dropped by 4%, from 101,608 to 97,649.

From 1994/95 to 1998/99, public school enrollment in Canada was virtually unchanged (down by 0.6%). Again, Newfoundland had the most dramatic decrease (down 14%). The only provinces to show an increase were Alberta (3.3%) and British Columbia (5%).

The most dramatic increases in grade enrollment over this five-year period were in Grades 2 and 3. Enrollment in Grade 12 had the largest decrease.

More Students in Private Schools

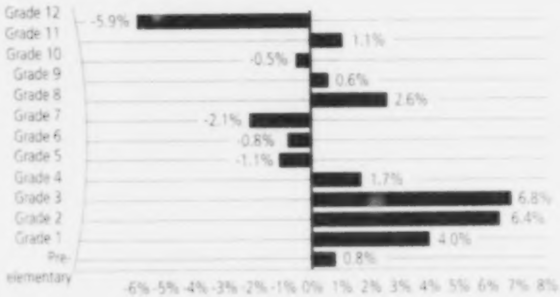
Between 1994/95 and 1998/99, Canadian private schools experienced an increase in enrollment of almost 10%. Ontario private schools had the largest increase (20%), from 75,712 to 90,600 students. British Columbia was not far behind with an 18% increase over the five-year period. However, the number of private school students in Saskatchewan dropped by 23%.

Learning a Second Language

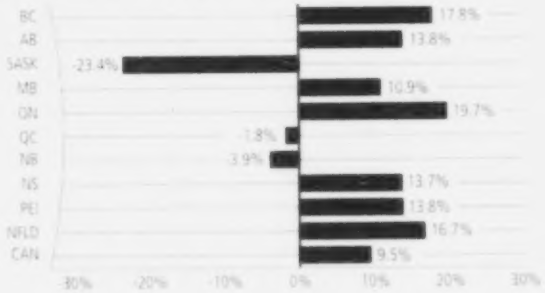
Second-language programs are designed to offer students of the majority official language group (that is, French in Quebec, English elsewhere) instruction in the minority language. In 1998/99, 1,976,000 students attending English schools outside Quebec were enrolled in French Second Language programs (immersion or regular).

Second language enrollment decreased outside Quebec by 4% and within Quebec by 6% between 1994/95 and 1998/99. The only province that showed an increase was BC, where enrollment in these programs went up by 2%. The decreases in some provinces were dramatic. ◆

PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, BY GRADE, 1994/95 to 1998/99



PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, BY PROVINCE, 1994/95 to 1998/99



Source: Statistics Canada: Education in Canada 2000. *Cat. 81-229.*

TUITION FEES CONTINUE TO RISE

Canada's university students experienced another increase in tuition fees for the academic year 2002/03. The average tuition fee for undergraduate students rose 4.1% over 2001/02 – from $3,585 to $3,733 per year. This is almost double the average tuition of $1,872 in 1992/93.

How do tuition fee increases compare with inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index? Over the last decade from 1990/91 to 2000/01, inflation rose by 20.6%, while tuition fees rose by 135.4%, or six times faster!

The 4.1% increase in 2002/03 – which followed a 4.0% increase in 2001/02 – was the largest of the last three years. Fortunately, the rate of increase has started to slow. Over the last three years, tuition rose by an average of 3.9% per year, a rate less than half that recorded in the 1990s.

The average undergraduate fees remain highest in Nova Scotia (at $5,214), followed by fees in Ontario (at $4,634). Tuition fees actually fell by 10% in Newfoundland in 2002/03. BC saw the largest increase – 25% – after having seven years of frozen or lowered tuition fees. For Quebec residents attending universities in Quebec, tuition fees were frozen at $1,675 for the sixth consecutive year; students from other provinces attending Quebec universities faced a 3.8% increase in their tuition fees.

Rising tuition fees are a direct result of government reductions in funding to universities. In 1999/2000, tuition fees represented 16% of total university revenues, compared with 9% of revenues in 1989/90. ◆

AVERAGE UNDERGRADUATE ARTS TUITION FEES
1993/94 to 2002/03

	1993/94	2002/03	% increase
CAN	$2,023	$3,733	85
NFLD	$2,000	$2,729	37
PEI	$2,509	$3,891	55
NS	$2,701	$5,214	93
NB	$2,385	$4,186	76
QC	$1,550	$1,851	19
ON	$2,076	$4,634	123
MB	$2,272	$3,248	43
SASK	$2,341	$4,106	75
AB	$2,209	$4,165	89
BC	$2,240	$3,165	41

Source: Statistics Canada. "University Tuition Fees," in The Daily, *August 25, 1999, and "University Tuition Fees," in* The Daily, *August 21, 2002.*

Supplemental Learning Centres in Canada

Private learning centres that give students one-on-one tutoring for a fee are increasing in popularity.

Why? It is not clear what is creating this trend, but parents who can afford to top-up their child's education with professional coaching in reading, math and other subjects outside school are spurring the expansion of these centres.

The people who offer tutoring services note that their aim is to improve a student's academic performance and at the same time, increase a child's confidence and self-esteem.

Parents may send their child to a learning centre to provide help with a particular subject, to encourage better study habits, or to make up for time lost at school due to illness. Some parents may send their preschoolers to prepare them for the school curriculum, and others may send high school seniors to improve their chances of university admission.

Kumon Math and Reading Centres and Sylvan Learning Centres are two of the largest North American operations that run centres in Canada. The national average monthly enrollment at Kumon centres increased by 38%, from 24,000 in 1996 to 33,000 in June 2000. At Sylvan, average monthly enrollment more than doubled, from 5,500 in 1995 to 10,300 in mid-2000. The Ontario-based Oxford Learning Centres currently have 10,000 students enrolled in their programs monthly.

In addition to the large franchise operations – Kumon, for example, has 340 centres across Canada – there are also many smaller companies in the business of tutoring students. The rates charged by learning centres vary, depending on the program. For example, Oxford charges an average fee of $295 per month for eight sessions; Sylvan charges an average monthly fee of $360; Kumon charges a flat fee per subject, with its math and English programs at $60 per week per program.

Obviously not all parents can afford to pay these fees, even if their child could use some extra help after school, but enough parents are finding the money to enroll their children. Learning centres seem to have found a niche in the educational system by responding to demands for more one-on-one help than schools have the time or resources to give the students. ◆

Use of Health Care Practitioners

In 1998, 82% of children up to age 11 had seen a general practitioner or a pediatrician at least once in the previous year. This rate has declined slightly since 1994 when it was 84%, but it was about the same rate as in 1996 (81%). Younger children were more likely than older children to have seen a doctor.

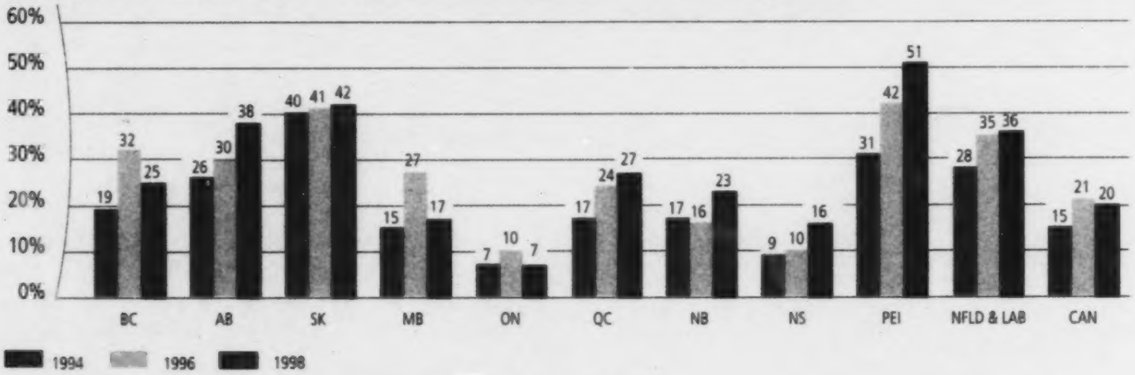
There were some provincial differences. Only 73% of children in Nova Scotia and 76% of those in Alberta had seen a physician, compared with 88% in PEI and 85% in Quebec. Alberta and Nova Scotia had greater declines than Canada overall or other provinces.

The proportion of children who see public health nurses or nurse practitioners has increased since 1994. In 1998, 20% of children up to age 11 had seen a public health nurse at least once in the previous year, up from 15% in 1994, and about the same proportion as in 1996 (21%). Younger children were more likely than older children to see public health nurses or nurse practitioners – 25% of all children under 6 had seen a nurse in 1998, compared with 10% of children aged 14 and 15.

There were substantial provincial differences in the proportion of children who see public health nurses or nurse practitioners, and variations from year-to-year. Half of the children in PEI and four of 10 children in Saskatchewan had seen a nurse in 1998.

Slightly more children up to age 11 had seen a dentist or orthodontist in 1998 than in 1994 – 61% compared to 57%. The proportion was 59% in 1996. Family income does not influence whether a child sees a pediatrician, but it has a large impact on whether they are able to see a dentist or orthodontist. ◆

CHILDREN'S USE OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES OR NURSE PRACTITIONERS, BY PROVINCE
% of children up to age 11 who have used services at least once in the previous year



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1994, 1996, & 1998.

CHILD CARE IN CANADA

Quality early childhood education and care provides children with a stable and healthy environment in which to learn and grow.

In 1998, there were 516,734 regulated child care spaces in Canada. This meant that during 1998, only 10% of children up to age 12 had a regulated child care space available for them. While that figure rose from 7.5% in 1992, it is still inadequate.

A regulated child care space may include a placement in a centre-based child care centre, a school-based child care space, or a regulated family day care centre. Most Canadian provinces had an increase in regulated child care spaces between 1992 and 1998. The exceptions were PEI and Alberta.

The majority of regulated centre-based spaces (77%) are run as not-for-profits and are publicly operated. The remaining 23% are commercially run operations. Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of not-for-profit centre-based spaces (99%); Newfoundland has the lowest proportion at 39%.

The NLSCY gives us some idea of the demand for child care. In 1998, over 2 million children under 12 were in some kind of child care while their parents worked or studied. That represented 47% of the child population, and it was up from 43% (just under 2 million children) in 1996. The majority of the increase was accounted for by younger children up to age 5.

WHERE WERE THE CHILDREN?

- 27% were cared for by a relative other than a sibling – up from 19% in 1996.
- 10.6% were cared for by a sibling – down from 16% in 1996.
- almost 30% were cared for by a non-relative in another home – down from 32% in 1996.
- 11.4% were cared for by a non-relative in the child's home, unchanged from 12% in 1996.
- 11% were in a child care centre – almost the same as the 10% in 1996.
- 6.4% were in before- or after-school programs – up slightly from 5% in 1996.

Almost one-quarter (23%) of all children under age 12 who were in child care in 1998 changed their arrangements at least once, and 6% changed twice or more. The situation was about the same in 1996. The most common reason for changing arrangements was that the caregiver or program were no longer available; this accounted for almost one-quarter (23%) of the most recent changes. Just over 11% of the changes were due to costs.

REGULATED CHILD CARE SPACES, by PROVINCE, 1992, 1995 & 1998
% of children aged 0 to 12 for whom a space was available

	1992	1995	1998
NFLD	3.3%	4.3%	5.0%
PEI	16.2%	15.5%	15.4%
NS	6.8%	6.8%	7.3%
NB	5.5%	6.3%	7.7%
QC	6.8%	9.4%	14.9%
ON	8.1%	7.7%	8.5%
MB	9.1%	9.5%	10.5%
SASK	3.1%	3.8%	3.9%
AB	9.7%	9.6%	8.8%
BC	7.4%	9.6%	10.8%
NWT	5.7%	n/a	n/a
YK	16.7%	n/a	n/a
CAN	7.5%	8.4%	10.0%

Source: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada: Provinces and Territories, *1998.*

SUMMERTIME

What kinds of child care arrangements are parents who are working or studying able to make for their school-aged children over the summer?

Over one-quarter (27%) of the children were in the parent's own care, with the parent not working over the summer. Almost 12% of the children were cared for by a sibling, and almost 9% looked after themselves. Nine per cent of children were cared for by their own parents while the parent was working. Almost 52,000 or 2.3% of parents took unpaid leave during the summer or quit their jobs, and almost 70,000 or 3.1% rearranged their work schedules.

Only 9% of children were in a structured summer program. Children in higher-income households ($40,000+) were more likely than those in lower-income households (under $40,000) to be in structured summer programs – 11% compared with 7%. ◆

CHRISTIE LAKE CAMP and COMMUNITY CENTRES

Anyone who has enrolled kids in a summer camp is aware of the costs involved – costs that would normally put camp well out of reach for children growing up in low-income families. But imagine a camp where families pay only what they can afford – even if that means paying nothing at all.

That was the vision behind Christie Lake Camp, founded in 1922 near Perth, Ontario, as a camp for boys living in poverty. Today, the Christie Lake Community Centres organization continues to operate the summer camp, which now welcomes both girls and boys. It also runs the STAR program (Skills Through Activity and Recreation) in Ottawa once camp is over.

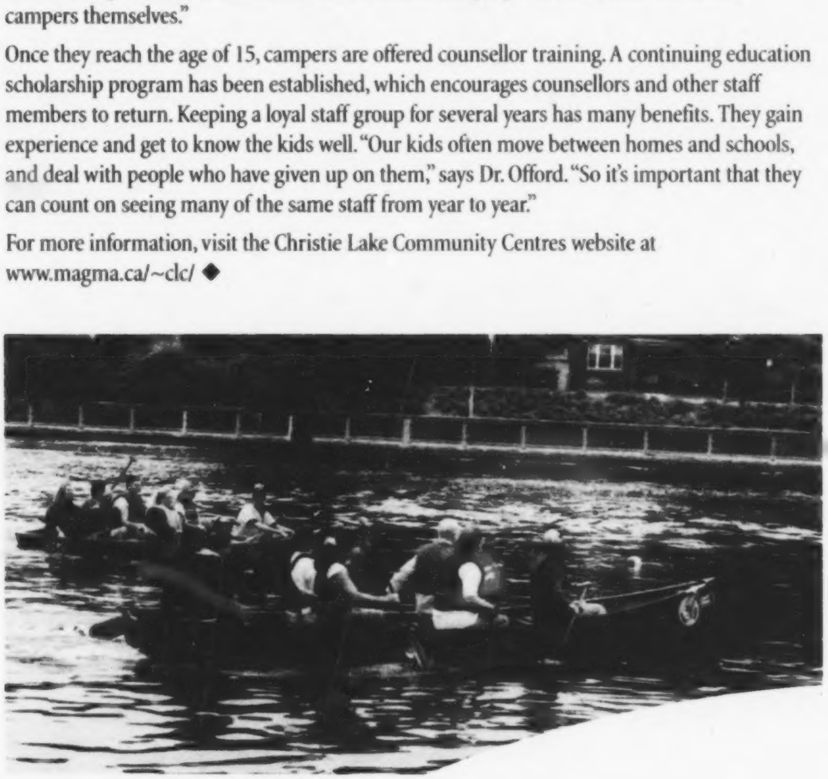
"Research shows us that kids from low-income families have major deficits when it comes to opportunities for skill-developing activities outside of school," says Dr. Dan Offord, the volunteer Director of Christie Lake Camp for over 40 years and the driving force behind its success. "Our policy of guaranteed access for low-income kids helps address those deficits."

By the end of two weeks at camp, most kids have several award badges to show off – real proof of their achievements in attaining skills in activities like swimming, canoeing, arts and crafts. Their new-found self-confidence often carries over into other aspects of their lives. The STAR program, which runs for 32 weeks, offers such activities as hockey, computers, cooking, music, basketball and karate. All equipment is provided and extra clothes are given out as needed.

"The staff and volunteers of the Camp and STAR play a critical role," says Dr. Offord. "Many of them are parents of children who have attended the programs, and some are former campers themselves."

Once they reach the age of 15, campers are offered counsellor training. A continuing education scholarship program has been established, which encourages counsellors and other staff members to return. Keeping a loyal staff group for several years has many benefits. They gain experience and get to know the kids well. "Our kids often move between homes and schools, and deal with people who have given up on them," says Dr. Offord. "So it's important that they can count on seeing many of the same staff from year to year."

For more information, visit the Christie Lake Community Centres website at www.magma.ca/~clc/ ◆



Services for Children with Specia Needs

Children and youth with special needs are not being served adequately, according to a CCSD survey of 112 Canadian agend working with children and youth in their communities.

There are many barriers to providing services for these children and their families. Some barriers involve the se ices themselves – such as inadequate funding – while others involve proble facing the families, such as insufficien financial resources and an inability to provide support. Still other barriers ar community-wide and may include the negatives attitudes of the public and some professionals. There can also be physical attributes that still bar childre from services, such as the physical ina cessibility of some facilities or a lack o transportation to access the services.

The vast majority of the community agencies surveyed report that they do not have the financial and human resources they need to adequately se children and youth with special needs. Although some resources have been increased over the last five years for a number of these agencies, the deman still exceeds their ability to respond.

What is the result of all this? A numb of unmet needs. One of the most seri challenges facing service providers is the lack of trained personnel, includin professionals such as specialists in me tal health services, rehabilitation and special education. Other kinds of staff are also needed – such as aides, fami

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Children with mental health problems and those with behavioural difficulties seem to be the worst off. Respondents reported that there were not enough services for these children in the community, nor in the schools. The agencies did not have enough trained professional staff to work with the children, and there were too few social and recreational programs where the children could spend time.

Despite these difficulties, agencies are still doing a great deal to try to improve the situation. They are employing children, youth and adults with special needs both as paid staff and as volunteers. They are providing special training for their staff, and in the majority of cases, such training is mandatory. They are also seeking feedback about their services from the children and youth they serve. ◆

TECHNOLOGY IN THE SCHOOLS

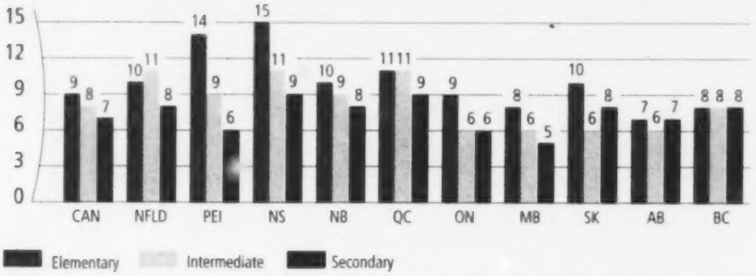
The majority of schools in Canada are connected to the Internet for educational purposes, according to a 1999 survey done by Statistics Canada and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement. Only 12% of elementary students attended a school that did not have access to the Internet, while only 3% of students at intermediate or secondary schools were without Internet access. In some provinces – like PEI and New Brunswick – all schools were connected to the Internet.

The ratio of students to computers varied according to the school level. The Canadian average was 9 students per computer in elementary schools, 8 students for every computer in intermediate schools, and 7 to 1 at the secondary school level. Children in higher grades tended to have the best access to computer technology.

Computers were most commonly used to obtain information from external databases (81% of schools in 1999), for example, to gather research information from websites. Forty per cent of schools used computer technology for e-mail, while 30% of schools used it for designing and maintaining websites. The Internet was used by 35% of schools to disseminate information. Using computers to discuss ideas via video conferencing was the least likely use (7%).

One of the major obstacles facing Canadian schools is a shortage of computer hardware and software. Time constraints on teachers to get training to upgrade their computer skills, prepare lessons, and schedule computer time with their classes were also concerns. Keeping pace with new and updated technology is difficult to achieve for many schools and teachers. ◆

RATIO OF STUDENTS PER COMPUTER, BY SCHOOL TYPE & PROVINCE, 1999



Source: Statistics Canada. "Computer Technology in Schools" drawn from the Second International Technology in Education Study (SITES), in The Daily, *October 12, 1999.*

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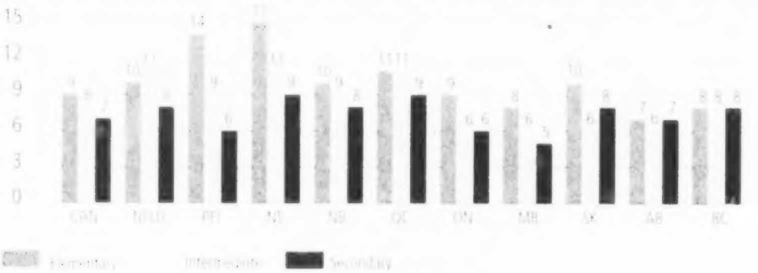


Source: Statistics Canada, "Computer Technology in Schools" drawn from the Second International Technology in Education Study (SITES) in The Daily, October 12, 1999.

Worrisome signs for education in Ontario

The group, People for Education in Ontario, surveyed 841 elementary schools in the province, representing 23% of the total number of elementary students. Schools from 71 of the province's 72 boards participated. The results are worrisome.

- The number of schools with only a part-time principal has doubled in the last five years.
- The number of schools with a teacher-librarian has dropped steadily over the last five years – from 80% in 1997/98 to only 59% in 2001/02.
- 24% of the schools surveyed needed fundraising efforts to pay for textbooks.
- The number of schools with specialist teachers has declined steadily over the last five years. In 2001/02, only 44% had music teachers, down from 58% in 1997/98 – a 24% drop. There has also been a 22% drop in the number of schools with physical education teachers – from 41% in 1997/98 to 32% in 2001/02.
- There has been a 31% decrease in the number of schools offering ESL programs – from 58% in 1997/98 to 40% in 2001/02.
- Waiting lists for special education services have increased by 14%, from 34,700 in 1999/00 to 39,700 in 2001/02.
- There have also been serious declines in students' access to professional services. Only 55% of schools have access to psychologists, 56% have access to social workers, and only 24% have access to speech therapists. ◆

THE CHALLENGES OF RURAL CHILD CARE

Families living in rural or farm settings experience a number of challenges in trying to secure child care.

In many communities, there are no trained child care workers, which means that families have to drive long distances to take their children to an established child care program in another community, or they must rely on informal care provided locally by untrained caregivers. And caregivers who want to take training may have to leave their small communities in order to get it.

Safety is a critical issue in farm communities. Rural children are exposed to a variety of risks not common to children in cities. For example, a rural child who is cared for by someone in the child's own home may be in the midst of a family workplace. As well, caregivers on farms must be aware of the many hazards in that environment, including exposure to chemicals, dangerous farm machinery and large animals.

Due to the seasonal nature of their work, farm families often need child care providers who can work irregular or very long hours. During planting season, for example, they may need child care for up to 16 hours a day.

Regulations concerning child care are specific for children of various ages under 12, such as set rules for infants, toddlers and school-aged children. Licensing requirements that separate children on the basis of age often do not meet the needs of small rural communities and farm workers who may require care for children of various ages under one roof. ◆

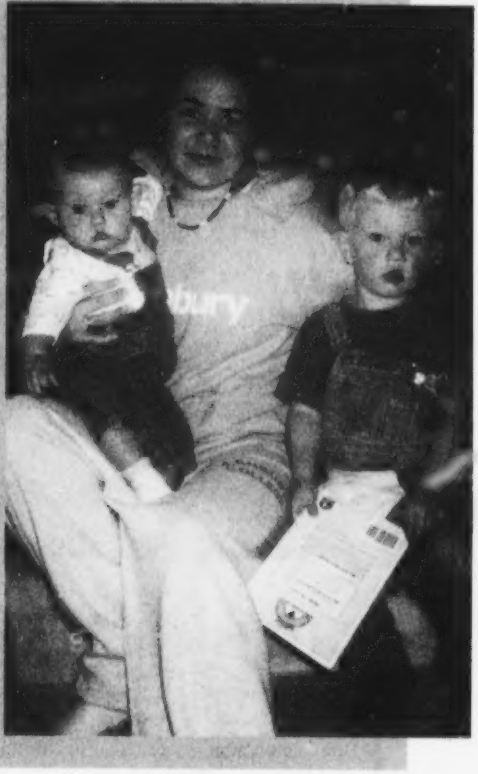
Need for Child Welfare Services Continues

CCSD's survey of provincial child welfare departments has found that demands for services continue to grow. Six of the nine provinces that participated in the survey reported an increase in the number of children and youth living in care. ◆

CHILDREN and YOUTH LIVING IN CARE, BY SELECTED PROVINCES, 1995/96 to 2000/01

	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
BC	7,278	8,232	9,368	9,813	9,523	9,956
AB	4,989	5,543	6,210	6,629	7,246	7,948
SASK**	2,543	2,416	2,884	3,030	3,291	3,263
MB	5,170	5,203	5,227	5,358	5,568	5,440
ON	9,868	10,398	11,260	12,748	13,480	14,992
NB*	1,087	1,060	1,103	1,144	1,235	1,288
NS	1,641	1,767	1,859	1,908	1,967	2,025
PEI	193	204	289	301	313	317
NFLD	729	721	689	717	703	602

Note: Comparisons among provinces are not possible due to differences in data collection and in definitions of "children in care."
**Monthly average*
***Includes 16- and 17-year-olds*
Source: Canadian Council on Social Development, Survey of Child Welfare Departments, August 2001.



HOUSING

Stable, affordable housing in a child-friendly neighbourhood is essential for healthy child development. Yet this is out of reach for many poor and modest-income families.

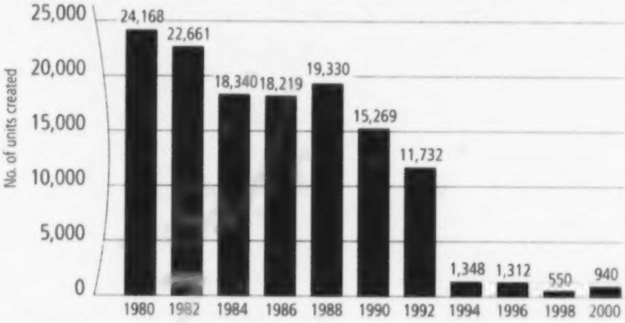
The number of Canadian children living in unaffordable housing (that is, more than 30% of pre-tax income is spent on dwelling costs) increased by 91% between 1989 and 1996. The number of households in Canada paying more than 50% of their income on rent increased by 43% between 1990 and 1995 – from 583,710 to 833,555 households. As a result, families are the fastest growing segment of the population requiring emergency shelter.

The production of new affordable housing has decreased dramatically, as most governments no longer support the production of social housing.

According to the NLSCY, 76% of children and youth up to age 15 lived in a home in 1998 that was owned by the resident. Eighty-three per cent of children aged 12 and 13 lived in an owner-occupied home, compared with 81% of children aged 14 and 15, and 72% of children up to age 5. About 233,000 children under age 16 (or 16%) lived in subsidized housing.

Just under 6% of all children under age 16 lived in housing in need of major repairs. This proportion was consistent across the age ranges. As would be expected, children in low-income families were more likely to live in housing in need of repair – almost three times more likely than other children. Children living in lone-parent families were much more likely than other children to live in housing in need of major repairs. ◆

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PRODUCED, 1980 to 2000



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Canadian Housing Statistics. *Reprinted with permission from Campaign 2000,* Family Security in Insecure Times: Tackling Canada's Social Deficit, *2001.*

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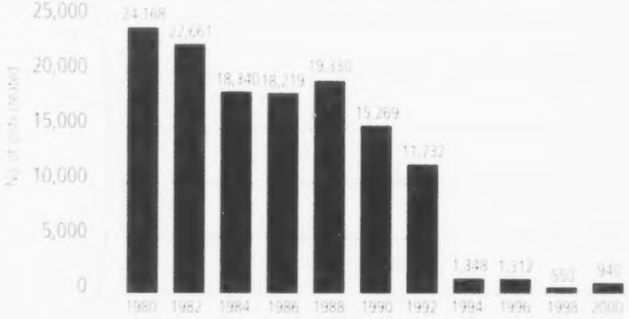


Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Canadian Housing Statistics. *Reprinted with permission from Campaign 2000.* Family Security in Insecure Times: Tackling Canada's Social Deficit. *2001.*

CIVIC VITALITY

Civic vitality refers to the strength of social networks within a community, region, province and country. It is reflected in the presence of institutions, organizations and informal practices that people create to share resources and build attachments with others.

YOUTH GET A SAY AT OTTAWA CITY HALL

The City of Ottawa has the proud distinction of being the first major Canadian city to have a youth advisory body: the Ottawa Youth Cabinet now provides city-wide, ward-by-ward youth representation to City Council.

The Ottawa Youth Cabinet evolved out of a Youth Transition Committee which was formed during the amalgamation of the previous regional government into the greater City of Ottawa. At that time, committee members looked at what other Canadian cities were doing to include youth in decisions that affected them. They found several cities with youth advisors to mayors or city councils.

"We heard of cities with youth representatives from this or that large section of their cities, but none of them had full geographic representation of one member per ward, the way we now do," says Russell Ullyatt, Senior Co-Chair of the Ottawa Youth Cabinet. "We're unique. We're not an ad hoc committee. We're a mandated advisory committee within the city structure itself."

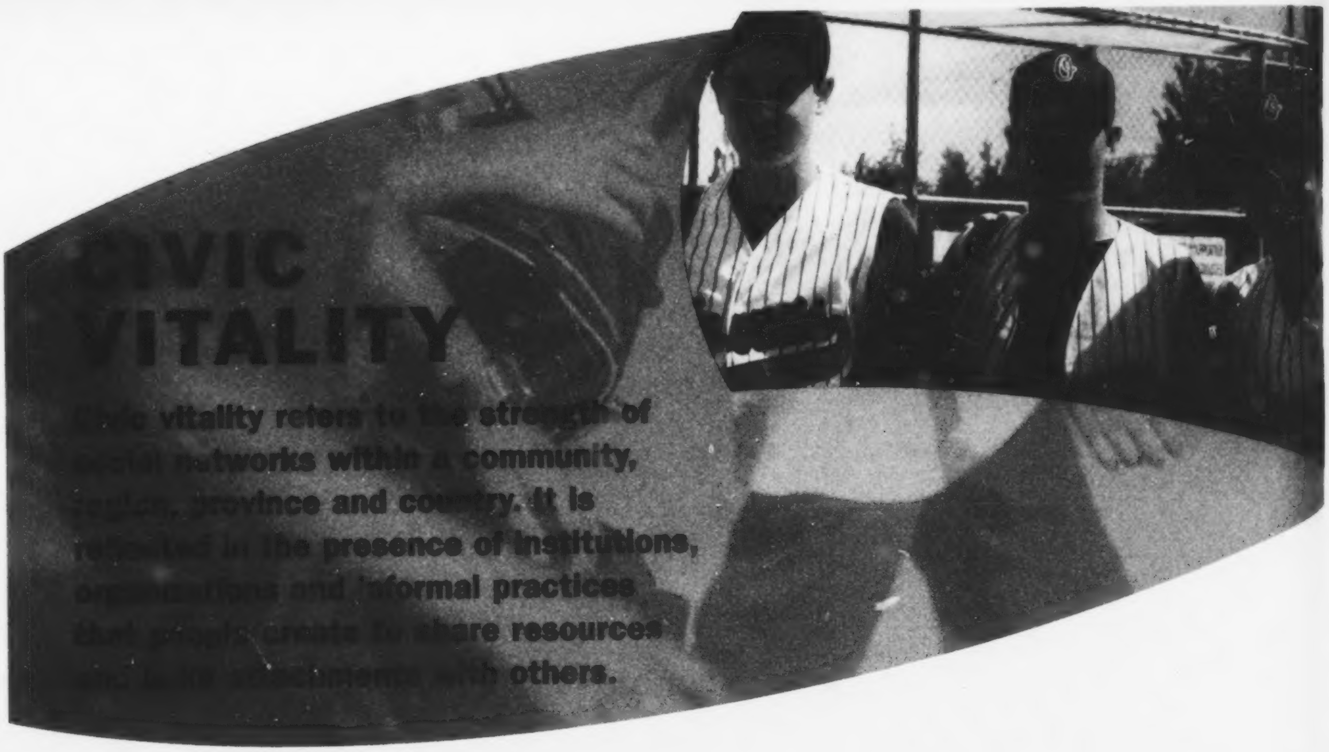
Being a front-runner brings many challenges. "It's been hard to find our place in the decision-making process. We're still finding our way," says Mr. Ullyatt. But things are starting to happen. City councillors have begun to seek input from their youth advisors. "For once, it wasn't youth clamoring to be heard. They came to us," he stresses. "They wanted us to draft a report on graffiti. I suppose they realized the value of a youth perspective."

Echoing some positive approaches used elsewhere in Canada to address similar problems, the Youth Cabinet's recommendations included taking a broader look at graffiti than just painting and cleaning. "One of the things we suggested was that the City provide some legitimate outlets for the dedication and energy that some graffiti artists clearly possess."

Mr. Ullyatt credits Ottawa City Council's three Youth Advocates – City councillors who sit as non-voting members of the Youth Cabinet – with invaluable assistance. "If not for them," he says, "our voices would not be heard nearly as well."

The experience of civic involvement has also been rewarding in other ways. The opportunity to develop relationships within City Council not only improves the chances for youth input in general, it can also lead to other opportunities. "Four of us are now working for City councillors," he says, "which probably wouldn't have happened if not for our involvement in the Youth Cabinet."

For more information, visit the Ottawa Youth Cabinet's website at www.ottawayouthcabinet.com ◆



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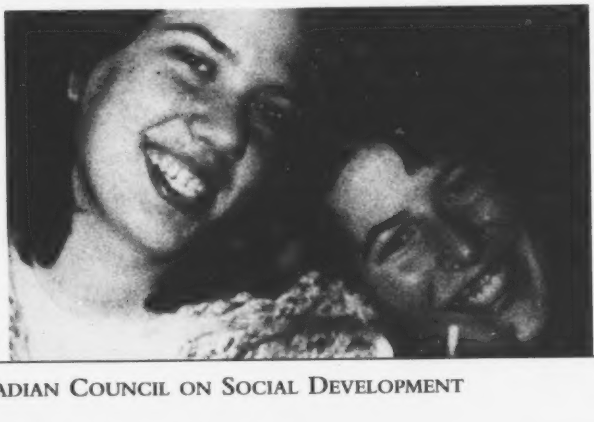

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The Relationship between Children and their Communities

Children's communities *do* make a difference to their growth and development. This was clearly evident in the analysis of data from the initiative, "Understanding the Early Years." In communities that had recreational areas, libraries, and preschool facilities nearby, young children were faring much better.

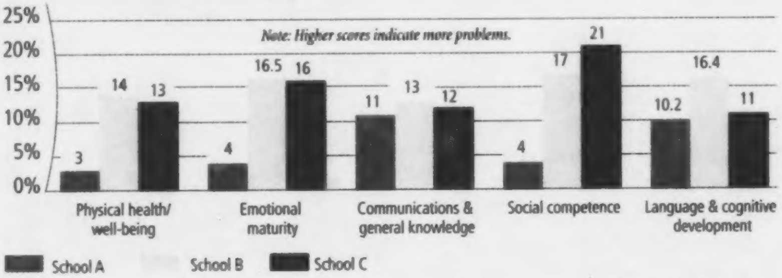
The study looked at the parks, recreational areas, libraries, preschool programs and parenting classes in the neighbourhoods surrounding three schools in North York, which is part of the amalgamated City of Toronto. One neighbourhood (School A) stood out from the others (Schools B and C) because of its plentiful community resources for young children and their families.

The study then compared how the children in these three neighbourhoods were doing in five developmental areas: physical health and well-being; social confidence (i.e., social knowledge and competence); emotional maturity; language richness; and general knowledge and cognitive skills.

A clear pattern emerged. Children in the neighbourhood of School A, which was well resourced with facilities and programs, scored better on the developmental components than children from the other two neighbourhoods, and they demonstrated behaviours much more consistent with being ready for school than did their peers. ◆

CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Selected North York English-language public schools, 1999



At School A, resources such as parks, libraries, & preschool programs are plentiful. Fewer resources are available in neighbourhoods surrounding Schools B and C.

Source: HRDC, Applied Research Branch. "Building an understanding of the relationship between children and their communities," in Applied Research Bulletin, *Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter/Spring, 2001.*

POOR CHILDREN AND CIVIC COMMUNITIES

"If I could change my neighbourhood, I would just move away, 'cause it's not safe here."

Edmonton's Quality of Life Commission interviewed poor children living in their city. The results, published in December 2000, clearly show that these children are not living in "civic" neighbourhoods where they feel protected and supported, and they lack access to healthy developmental opportunities like recreation.

The most compelling finding concerned the impact of poverty and living in low-income neighborhoods on children's feelings of safety and security. Perhaps surprisingly, the children did not dwell on a lack of money or food. First and foremost, they worried about their safety and the safety of their friends and family, and they talked about the impact of criminal activities on their daily lives. Many of them worried about whether they were safe at home sleeping in their beds at night. In all of the interviews, children routinely described experiences with guns and knives, domestic violence, police, theft, fire, drugs and alcohol use.

Many children described being afraid and worried. They were highly fearful of strange adults, and lacked trust in things that should be trustworthy, such as Block Parents.

In almost every interview, the children conveyed a strong sense of the importance of family and community, yet this seemed in contrast to – or perhaps was the result of – the complex and often difficult family circumstances in which many of them lived. Many lived apart from their parents, some lived with one parent or in blended families, or they moved back and forth between two households. Living situations frequently did not include their siblings, and often there were many extended family members involved, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, stepparents, and stepbrothers or sisters.

The second striking finding was the children's very limited participation in organized recreational and cultural activities. None of the children described experiences of playing on organized sports teams, or taking music, drama or dance lessons in extracurricular settings. By contrast, many of them spoke of their enjoyment in going swimming or playing soccer on the school playground at recess, and some spoke of their desire to play musical instruments. ◆

HOW SAFE ARE CHILDREN IN THEIR COMMUNITIES?

There has been a great deal of media attention on crime and safety in neighbourhoods and on bullying behaviour and violent crime in schools. The NLSCY asks parents how safe and secure they feel their neighbourhoods are for their children and asks the young people themselves how safe they feel at school.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

The majority of parents of children under 12 feel that they live in a community that helps keep their children safe. The majority of parents agreed or strongly agreed when they were asked such questions as: Do neighbours deal with problems together? Are there adults for kids to look up to? Do people help each other and look out for each other and everyone's children? The proportion who agreed with these statements increased somewhat between 1994 and 1998.

When asked how safe overall their neighbourhood was in terms of their children's well-being, 51% gave it an excellent rating – up from 44% in 1994. A further 34% of parents gave their neighbourhood a good rating. On a scale of 1 to 15 for how good their neighbourhood was for children, 92% rated their neighbourhood in the top half of the scale – up from 89% in 1994.

HOW DO PARENTS FEEL ABOUT THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS?

Strongly agree / agree	1994	1998
Neighbours deal with problems together.	72%	76%
There are adults for kids to look up to.	86%	90%
People are willing to help each other.	90%	93%
Adults watch out that children are safe.	88%	91%
If I'm away, neighbours watch for trouble.	90%	93%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994 & 1998.

SAFE AT SCHOOL

What about school? Just over half (55%) of children aged 10 and 11 said they felt safe at school all the time, and another third (32%) said they felt safe most of the time. Those figures have not changed since 1994.

Why do some children feel unsafe at school? For children aged 10 and 11:

- 33% said that other children say mean things to them all, most, or some of the time – up from 9% in 1994.
- 14% said they were bullied at school all, most, or some of the time – up from 11% in 1994.
- 7% were bullied on the way to school all, most, or some of the time – up from 4% in 1994.
- 16% said they felt left out all, most, or some of the time – down slightly from 18% in 1994.

Among children aged 12 and 13, 16% said they felt left out all, most, or some of the time – up from 12% in 1996.

Boys were more likely than girls to say they felt safe at school all of the time. However, boys reported more trouble with bullying, feeling left out, or being treated meanly by their peers. Of all 10- and 11-year-olds in 1998:

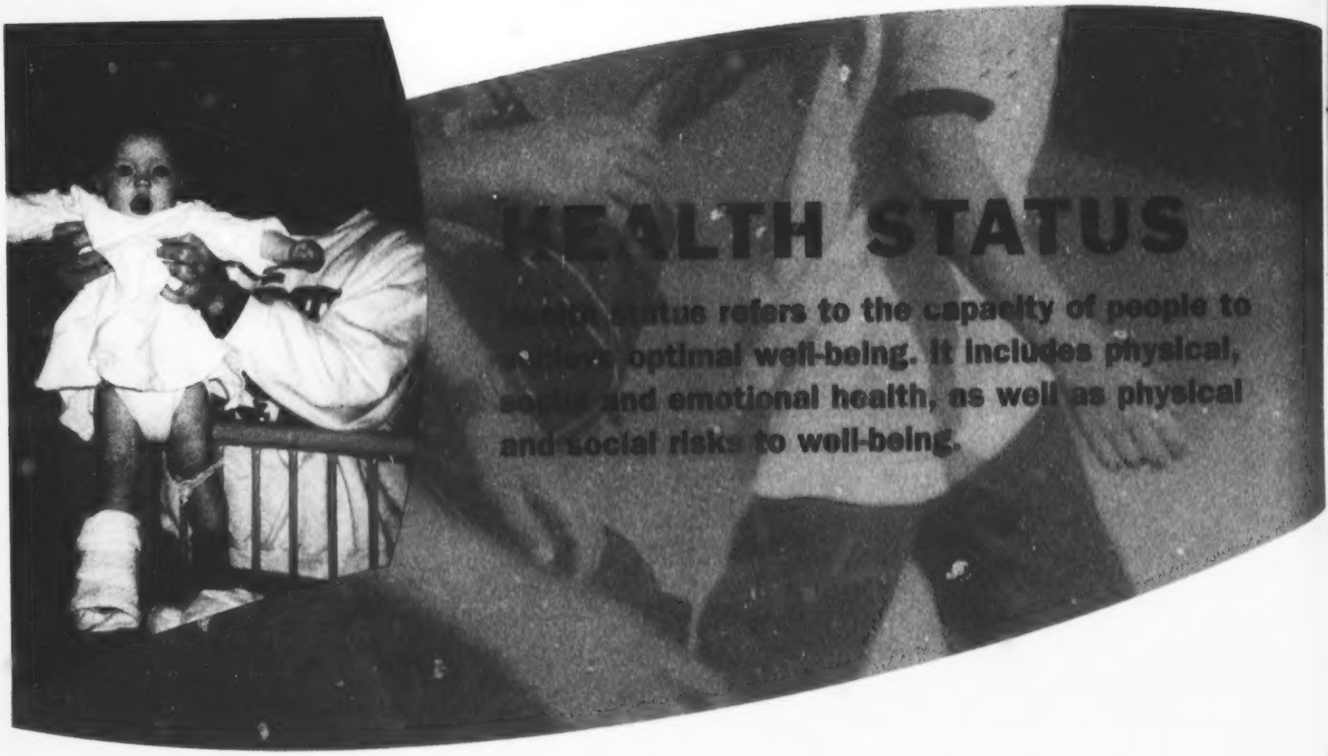
- 16% of boys reported that other children said mean things to them all or most of the time, compared with 11% of girls.
- 8% of boys said they were bullied all or most of the time, compared with 4% of girls.

Among boys aged 10 to 13, 6% said they felt left out at school all or most of the time, compared with 3% of girls. ◆

How Children and Youth are Faring

The healthy development of young Canadians depends on many important factors, including strong and loving families, safe and inclusive neighbourhoods, and secure family incomes. These factors determine how children and youth develop. Together, they shape the unique mix of opportunities and challenges that children face as they progress towards adulthood.

What are the results of Canada's efforts on behalf of children and youth? *The Progress of Canada's Children* looks at four indicators of young people's progress – their health status, social engagement, learning, and the labour force profile of youth. These indicators allow us to measure changes in how children and youth are faring over time. This year, we report on changes – both positive and negative – that have occurred since 1994, the baseline year for this project.



HEALTH STATUS

Health status refers to the capacity of people to achieve optimal well-being. It includes physical, social and emotional health, as well as physical and social risks to well-being.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A lack of daily physical activity is seriously compromising the health of Canadian children and youth.

Between 1981 and 1996, rates of obesity nearly tripled among boys and more than doubled among girls – from 5% to 13.5% for boys and from 5% to 11.8% for girls. The prevalence of being overweight among boys increased from 15% in 1981 to 28.8% by 1996, and among girls, from 15% to 23.6%.

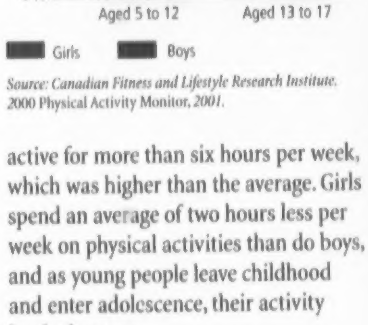
Over half of children and youth aged 5 to 17 are not active enough for their optimal growth and development. Girls are less active than boys: only 38% of girls and 48% of boys are considered active enough for optimal health benefits. This problem affects both grade-school children and teenagers. It is estimated that Canadian children now expend 400% less energy than their counterparts did 40 years ago.

Preschool-aged children (1 to 4 years) spend an average of 29 hours a week in physically active play, or about 4 hours a day. Children aged 5 to 12 spend an average of 16.5 hours a week – or less than 2 1/2 hours a day on physical activity.

The lack of physical education provided by schools may be one factor. Only one in five Canadian parents say that their children aged 5 and older receive daily physical education at school, and 10% report that their children receive none. Forty-one per cent of parents report that their children receive physical education one to two days a week, and 27% say their children participate three or four days a week.

Insufficient physical activity among children and youth seems to be an international trend. A recent Ipsos-Reid poll found that young people are spending more and more time in front of computers and televisions and less time on physical activities. The youth (aged 12 to 24) polled in 17 countries devoted an average of just over five hours per week to playing sports or exercising. Activities like reading, listening to music, and watching TV consumed an average of 5 1/2 hours per day across all countries.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, BY AGE AND GENDER, 1998
Proportion of youth physically active enough for their optimal growth and development



Source: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, *2001.*

The good news is that young Canadians fared better than did youth in many other countries. Canadians, Italians, Argentines and Chinese reported being physically active for more than six hours per week, which was higher than the average. Girls spend an average of two hours less per week on physical activities than do boys, and as young people leave childhood and enter adolescence, their activity levels decrease.

Access to recreation has positive effects on children's health, according to NLSCY data. Young people aged 6 to 11 (in 1994) who participated regularly in recreation – that is, at least once a week in 1994, 1996 and 1998 – were more likely to be in excellent health, according to their parents. They were also more likely to demonstrate "prosocial" behaviour.

While one-third of youth aged 12 to 15 indicated that they were unhappy with how they looked, the proportion was much higher among those who had rarely or never participated in organized sports than it was among youth who had always participated (42% and 24%, respectively). This same pattern was evident among youth who were trying to lose weight: about 25% of those who had always participated in organized sports said they were trying to lose weight, whereas 40% of those who had rarely or never participated in sports or those had stopped participating were trying to lose weight. And among youth who had rarely or never participated in organized sports between 1994 and 1998, 23% said they smoked – almost three times the proportion of those who always participated (8%). ◆

First Nations and Inuit Children

The First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey (FNIRHS) 2001 provides us with important information about the health of First Nations and Inuit children.

According to this survey, the rate of low birth weight among First Nations and Inuit babies did not differ significantly from that of babies who were included in the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY). Approximately 5% of infants in both surveys had a birth weight of less than 2,500 grams.

However, standards of growth for weight and height tend to be based on non-Native populations, and there is some evidence to suggest that First Nations and Inuit infants may have different growth patterns. A weight of 2,500 grams may be too low for the First Nations population to identify infants who are at increased risk of health problems.

High birth weight (above 4,000 gm) is also associated with higher infant death rates. Among First Nations and Inuit babies, 17.9% had a high birth weight, compared to 12.1% of infants in the NLSCY.

Approximately half of mothers in the FNIRHS reported that their child had been breast-fed, a much lower rate than the 75% reported in the NLSCY. However, First Nations and Inuit children were breast-fed for longer. Fifty-five per cent were breast-fed for more than seven months, compared to 24% of children in the NLSCY.

About 84% of FNIRHS respondents reported that their child's health was excellent or very good, compared with 88% in the NLSCY.

Overall, 15% of First Nations and Inuit children were reported to have ear problems, and the rates varied by age. Among children aged 0 to 5, 20% had ear problems, compared with 17% of children aged 6 to 11 and 11% of those aged 12 to 17. Thirteen per cent of the children had allergies, 12% had asthma, and 7% had bronchitis and overweight problems. Two per cent of children up to age 11 had psychological problems, as did 4% of those aged 12 to 17.

(continued on next page)

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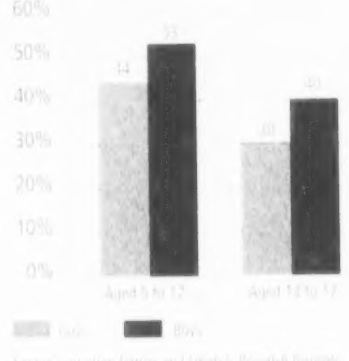

Source: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, 2000 Physical Activity Monitor, 2001.

Access to recreation has positive effects on children's health, according to NLSCY data. Young people aged 6 to 11 (in 1994) who participated regularly in recreation – that is, at least once a week in 1994, 1996 and 1998 – were more likely to be in excellent health, according to their parents. They were also more likely to demonstrate "prosocial" behaviour.

While one-third of youth aged 12 to 15 indicated that they were unhappy with how they looked, the proportion was much higher among those who had rarely or never participated in organized sports than it was among youth who had always participated (42% and 24%, respectively). This same pattern was evident among youth who were trying to lose weight: about 25% of those who had always participated in organized sports said they were trying to lose weight, whereas 40% of those who had rarely or never participated in sports or those had stopped participating were trying to lose weight. And among youth who had rarely or never participated in organized sports between 1994 and 1998, 23% said they smoked – almost three times the proportion of those who always participated (8%). ◆

First Nations and Inuit Children

The First Nations and Inuit Regional Health Survey (FNIRHS) 2001 provides us with important information about the health of First Nations and Inuit children.

According to this survey, the rate of low birth weight among First Nations and Inuit babies did not differ significantly from that of babies who were included in the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY). Approximately 5% of infants in both surveys had a birth weight of less than 2,500 grams.

However, standards of growth for weight and height tend to be based on non-Native populations, and there is some evidence to suggest that First Nations and Inuit infants may have different growth patterns. A weight of 2,500 grams may be too low for the First Nations population to identify infants who are at increased risk of health problems.

High birth weight (above 4,000 gm) is also associated with higher infant death rates. Among First Nations and Inuit babies, 17.9% had a high birth weight, compared to 12.1% of infants in the NLSCY.

Approximately half of mothers in the FNIRHS reported that their child had been breast-fed, a much lower rate than the 75% reported in the NLSCY. However, First Nations and Inuit children were breast-fed for longer. Fifty-five per cent were breast-fed for more than seven months, compared to 24% of children in the NLSCY.

About 84% of FNIRHS respondents reported that their child's health was excellent or very good, compared with 88% in the NLSCY.

Overall, 15% of First Nations and Inuit children were reported to have ear problems, and the rates varied by age. Among children aged 0 to 5, 20% had ear problems, compared with 17% of children aged 6 to 11 and 11% of those aged 12 to 17. Thirteen per cent of the children had allergies, 12% had asthma, and 7% had bronchitis and overweight problems. Two per cent of children up to age 11 had psychological problems, as did 4% of those aged 12 to 17.

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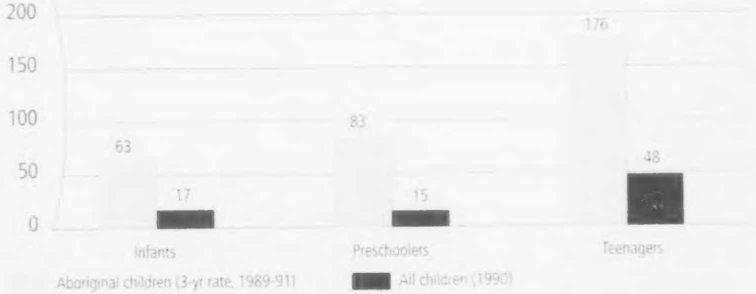
Compared to all children in Canada, Native children are much more likely to die from injuries. Among infants, for example, the rate of death from injuries was almost four times greater than for all children; for pre-schoolers, the rate was five times greater, and for teenagers, it was three times greater than for all children.

The rate of injuries reported among First Nations and Inuit children was very high. Thirteen per cent of children and youth in the FNIRHS had experienced broken bones or fractures. Serious head injuries, serious burns, near drownings, and frostbite or hypothermia were all experienced by more than 1% of children and youth.

Over three-quarters of the children in the survey were described as getting along with their family very well or quite well. The proportion that did not get along well with their family was highest in the older age group (12 to 17 years). Seventeen per cent of children had had behavioural or emotional problems in the previous six months. Again, the rates were highest among the older age group: 9% of children under age 6 had behavioural problems, compared with 18% of children aged 6 to 11 and 23% of children aged 12 to 17. ◆

INJURY DEATH RATES AMONG ABORIGINAL AND CANADIAN CHILDREN, by Age Group, Rate per 100,000



Source: Louise Hanvey & Denise Avard. The Health of Canada's Children: A CICH Profile. *2nd Edition. Canadian Institute of Child Health, 1994.*

THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON THE HEALTH OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Poverty is taking a dreadful toll on the health, well-being and development of Aboriginal children in urban centres across Ontario.

The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres interviewed Aboriginal parents and front-line workers in seven cities in the province to learn about the impact of poverty. When asked about the day-to-day realities of living in poverty, respondents talked about budget shortfalls and insufficient money for food, clothing, housing, transportation, basic health care, and recreation.

Both parents and front-line workers confirmed that the level of poverty among many urban Aboriginal families has now reached rock bottom, and even the most basic needs are not being met. Children and parents are missing meals, or not eating the kinds of foods that are required to maintain their health and development.

Food insecurity among urban Aboriginal people has resulted in overwhelming demands for emergency supplies from Friendship Centres. In some cases, the insecurity is such that parents are putting their children into the care of the Children's Aid Society. As well, the unmanageable cost of diapers results in babies coming to the drop-off programs with diapers hanging to their knees and with skin sores from infrequent diaper changes. Parents who cannot afford Enfalac have taken to feeding their newborn babies powdered milk.

The damaging psychological effects of poverty were mentioned in every interview. Feelings of low-self esteem, depression, anger, self-doubt, intimidation, frustration, shame and hopelessness are reported to be crushing the spirits of Aboriginal families living in poverty. ◆

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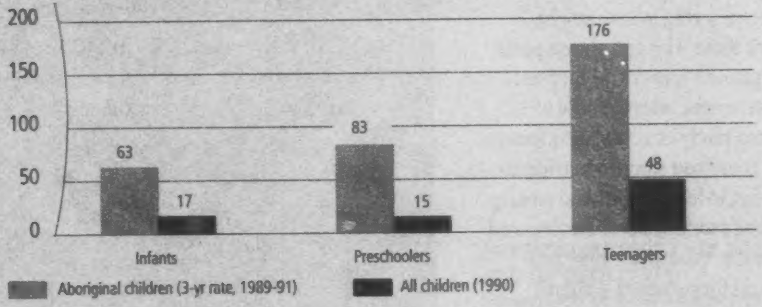

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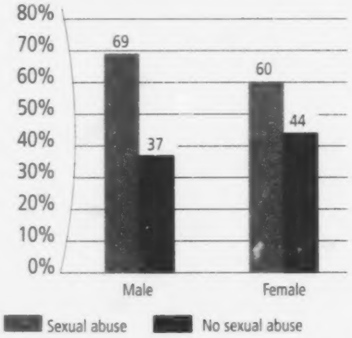
TENUOUS CONNECTIONS

As a result of concerns about the pregnancy rate among Aboriginal teens, the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres conducted a study of urban Aboriginal youth. The study, which involved 255 young people in the province, found that Aboriginal youth are at risk because of their sexual practices.

Aboriginal youth are becoming sexually active as young as age 11. By the age of 16, 62% of those interviewed were sexually active, and more than half reported little or no use of contraceptives. Alcohol and drugs are a major factor in the sexual practices and the high incidences of teen pregnancy: many youth are having sex when their ability to make appropriate choices and take responsibility is impaired. Casual attitudes and expectations about sex among teens have also led many Aboriginal youth to feel pressured to engage in sex before they are ready to do so.

Sixty-one per cent of the female respondents and 35% of the males had experienced some sort of sexual abuse. They did not elaborate on the negative repercussions of the abuse in their lives, but the data indicate that abused youth were more likely to have unprotected sex and to have more partners, and they were more likely to be involved in a teen pregnancy.

PROPORTION OF ABORIGINAL YOUTH WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN A PREGNANCY, BY EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL ABUSE



Source: Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. Tenuous Connections, *2002.*

Twenty-four per cent of the youth under age 19 had been involved in a pregnancy, despite their expressed ideals of starting their families after the age of 25 and wanting only two or three children. Most of the youth who became pregnant kept their children, and relatively few had abortions or gave their children up for adoption.

Although pregnancy is something of a social norm, teens who become pregnant can still feel stigmatized and isolated. Many of the young Aboriginal women were not supported by their families nor their parenting partner. This is troubling, given that some of the youth reported becoming sexually active or pregnant because of feelings of loneliness and a need for love.

The youth said they identified with their Native culture and spirituality, but seemed to lack the teachings or opportunities to access traditional knowledge. They felt at a loss for things to do and in need of trusting relationships with adults. ◆

Teen drug use remains high

For the first time in a decade, drug use among Ontario youth did not increase in 2001, but the rate is still higher than it was during the 1990s, according to the Ontario Drug Use Survey. The 1980s were a period of declining drug use, but rates rose again in the 1990s. In 2001, there was no significant drop in the overall number of students who used illicit drugs, and use of the drug ecstasy rose from 2% to 7% among Grade 9 students.

Heavy drinking remains a problem among youth, with the percentage of youth who get drunk rising to 27% in 2001 from 17% in 1993. The number of youth who reported binge drinking – having five or more drinks at a time – rose to 25% in 2001, up from 18% eight years earlier.

Youth are beginning to drink at a young age. Asked in the NLSCY whether they had ever been drunk, 30% of children aged 12 to 13 and 62% of those aged 14 to 15 said "Yes." While two-thirds of children aged 12 to 13 reported that they did not have any friends who drank alcohol, only 30% of children aged 14 to 15 made this claim. ◆

Being Out

What are some of the issues associated with growing up as a gay or lesbian in Canada? The first survey of its kind among young people in British Columbia who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender provides some unique insights.

The results of this study, published in 1999, show that:

- Gay and lesbian youth in BC are at higher risk for emotional health problems and suicide, compared to their heterosexual peers. Forty-six per cent of gay and lesbian youth had attempted suicide at least once. In the year preceding the study, one-quarter of the youth surveyed had attempted suicide. The average age at their first suicide attempt was 13.
- Almost 40% of gay and lesbian youth have dramatically low self-esteem.
- Sixty-one per cent of youth surveyed had been physically abused, and 40% had been sexually abused.
- Lesbian and gay youth found the strongest personal support from close friends and female family members.
- School is not a safe or supportive place for most gay and lesbian youth. Thirty-seven per cent felt like outsiders at school, two-thirds often heard homophobic remarks from other students, and nearly one in five had been physically assaulted at school in the year preceding the survey.
- Most non-heterosexual youth are reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation to teachers, health care workers or social service providers. Only 39% had told a teacher or school counsellor that they were gay or lesbian, and about one-quarter had told their doctor. ◆

FOLLOWING-UP FAMILIES THAT REPORT CHILD HUNGER

by Lynn McIntyre, Dean of Health Sciences, Dalhousie University

Children living in families where there is sometimes not enough to eat can experience health problems and generally poor social and living conditions. In 1994 and 1996, less than 2% of all Canadian families experienced hunger, but that is still a lot of hungry families in a wealthy nation – approximately 75,000 in 1996, up from 54,000 families in 1994.

A recent national study followed families which reported child hunger from 1994 to 1996, in order to examine their characteristics, coping strategies, and child outcomes. These families were part of a study of more than 16,000 children across Canada.

The study found that hungry families were six times more likely than other families to be led by a lone parent, and they were eight times more likely to be on social assistance or welfare. People of Aboriginal descent were four times more likely than other respondents to report hunger.

Hungry children had higher reported rates of asthma and generally poorer health status than children who did not experience hunger. Families which reported child hunger frequently sought food from food banks, relatives and friends. Parents were over six times more likely than their children to skip meals.

One-fifth of families reported child hunger in both 1994 and 1996. These families experienced high levels of family dysfunction, despite the fact that they reported few changes in employment (usually unemployment) or family composition. The main factors that led to family hunger were job loss and having another mouth in the household to feed. The main factor that helped a family to stop hunger was a full-time job for the mother.

The mean annual household income for those reporting hunger in 1996 was $26,909, compared to an average of $54,365 for non-hungry families. For families which reported child hunger in 1994 but not in 1996, the increase in mean annual household income was $3,827. For those which reported hunger in 1996 but not in 1994, their mean annual income had been reduced by $2,690.

These results underscore the need to monitor and support families experiencing significant financial disruptions in order to prevent all family members from suffering hunger and to improve the health of their children. ◆

Youth Smoking in Canada

Fewer Canadian teens are smoking. In 2001, 23% of Canadian teens aged 15 to 19 were smokers, down from 25% in 2000 and 28% in 1999. From a high of 49% in 1981, smoking among young people aged 20 to 24 declined steadily to 34% in 2001. While this is a dramatic decline, young adults still have the highest incidence of any age group.

Teenage girls are more likely than boys to smoke. About 26% of girls aged 15 to 19 are smokers, compared with 20% of boys. Among those aged 20 to 24, however, young men are more likely than young women to smoke (36% and 32%, respectively).

While there were almost 1.2 million young smokers aged 15 to 24 in 2000, smoking was not the norm. Among 20- to 24-year-olds, 58% said they had never smoked and another 10% described themselves as former smokers.

Smoking among youth is unevenly distributed across Canada. Teen smoking (ages 15 to 19) varied widely, from 18% in British Columbia to 30% in New Brunswick and Quebec; for youth aged 20 to 24, prevalence ranged from 28% in British Columbia and Ontario to 40% in Newfoundland.

Smoking rates increase sharply between the 15 to 17 and 18 to 19 age groups among both girls and boys, but particularly among boys, and much of the increase was in daily smoking rates. Twenty-three per cent of young men aged 18 to 19 were daily smokers, as were 22% of young women. Among daily smokers aged 15 to 24, the average was 13.4 cigarettes per day. Seventy per cent of smokers aged 15 to 19 had tried to quit at least once in the previous year, as had 63% of youth aged 20 to 24.

Where do young people get their cigarettes? Young smokers aged 15 to 19 obtained cigarettes from three main sources: small convenience stores (53%), gas stations (12%), and friends (19%). Just over half (54%) of teen smokers aged 15 to 17 said they were asked their age when trying to buy cigarettes. ◆

YOUTH SMOKING TRENDS IN CANADA, BY AGE & GENDER, 1981 to 2001
Among current smokers aged 15 to 24

	Aged 15 to 19		Aged 20 to 24	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
1981	46	42	47	50
1983	38	39	44	47
1985	28	29	41	41
1986	24	28	38	39
1988	20	23	33	41
1989	21	22	37	37
1990	21	20	36	34
1991	20	26	45	36
1994	26	28	42	38
1996	28	31	38	30
1998	25	32	37	31
1999	28	29	40	28
2000	23	27	33	32
2001	20	26	36	32

Sources: Health Canada. Youth Smoking in Canada, *Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, 2001; and Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, February to June, 2001.*

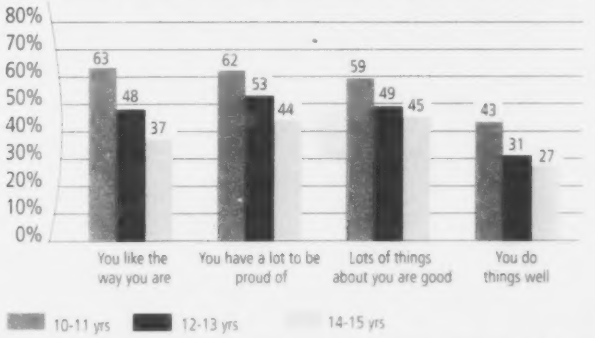
HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT THEMSELVES?

"You like the way you are."

Presented with that statement, less than half (49%) of young people aged 10 to 15 said it was true, and less than one-third felt that it was "mostly true." Just over half felt they had a lot to be proud of and they could think of lots of good things about themselves. One-third of these young people felt that the statement, "You do things well," was true. Boys were more likely than girls to feel positively about themselves.

As children get older, they are less likely to say that they like themselves and to think positively about their achievements and abilities. ◆

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEELINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES, by AGE GROUP
% who said the following statements were true, 1998



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

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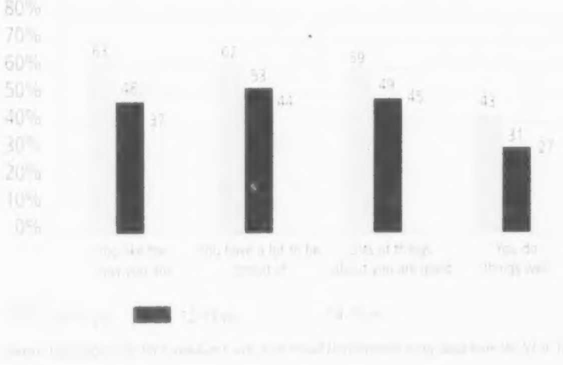


Sexual Health: The good news and the bad

Teen pregnancy rates decline

Teen pregnancy rates rose in Canada in the decade between 1987 and 1997, but they have been declining since that time. However, the current rate is about twice that of some other developed nations, such as France, the Netherlands and Sweden.

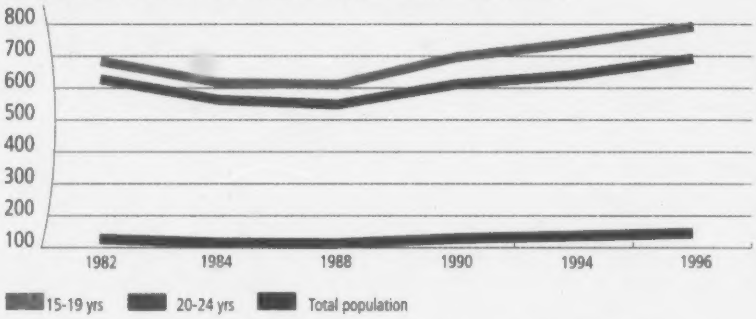
Approximately 42,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 became pregnant in Canada in 2000. That is 41.7 pregnancies per 1,000 in that population. About half of those pregnancies ended in abortion, indicating that at least half were unplanned.

The countries with lower teen pregnancy rates do not necessarily have less sexual activity among teens. For example, just over 50% of Canadian teens have had sex by age 18, a similar rate as in France, whereas in Sweden, the proportion is 62%. While a number of factors affect these rates, a key one is education. In the countries with lower teenage pregnancy rates, comprehensive sexuality education – not abstinence promotion – is emphasized.

Sexuality education is mandatory in state or public schools in France, Sweden, England and Wales (whose rate is similar to Canada's). In Sweden, the country with the lowest teenage birth rate, sexuality education has been mandated in schools for almost half a century.

Previous issues of *Progress* have documented the decline of sexuality education in Canada. Curriculum time available for sexuality education in schools has been reduced, and there

CHLAMYDIA RATES AMONG CANADIAN YOUTH, by Age Group, 1995 to 2000, Rate per 100,000 population



Source: Division of Sexual Health Promotion & STD Prevention & Control, Health Canada. D.M. Patrick; T. Wong; and R.A. Jordon. "Sexually transmitted infections in Canada: Recent resurgence threatens national goals," in The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, *9, 149-165, 2001.*

FRIDGE FOODS: HARD TO BUY ON A LOW INCOME

by Lynn McIntyre

Lone-parent mothers living on low incomes will go hungry so that their children can eat. Many people have long believed that statement to be true, and a recent study of 141 mothers in Atlantic Canada has confirmed it.

Four times over the course of a month, the mothers in this study filled out a food insecurity questionnaire and provided detailed information about what they and their children had eaten over the previous 24 hours.

The study found that low-income mothers sacrificed their essential nutritional needs for the sake of their children. Although the children's dietary intakes were are fewer services delivered directly to students by public health nurses in the schools.

More sexually transmitted infections

The rates of sexually transmitted infections are rising among young Canadians. Chlamydia rates for youth aged 15 to 24 declined from 1992 to 1997, but since then, rates have risen for both young men and young women. In 2000, the rate was 693 per 100,000 youth aged 15 to 19, an increase of 21% since 1997. In the 20 to 24 age group, the rate has increased by 23% since 1997, to 793 per 100,000. The infection rate is particularly high among young women. Young people aged 15 to 24 of both sexes accounted for 69% of all reported cases of chlamydia in Canada in 2000.

Gonorrhea rates are also increasing. These rates had declined for two decades until 1997, when the trend started to change. In 2000, the rate in Canada was 20 per 100,000 population. Among young people aged 15 to 24, the rate has increased by 29% since 1997, with infection rates high among both young men and women. In 2000, this age group accounted for almost half of all reported cases of gonorrhea in Canada.

Sexual activity

According to the Canadian Contraception Study, 27% of young women aged 15 to 17 and 82% of those aged 18 to 24 have had sexual intercourse.

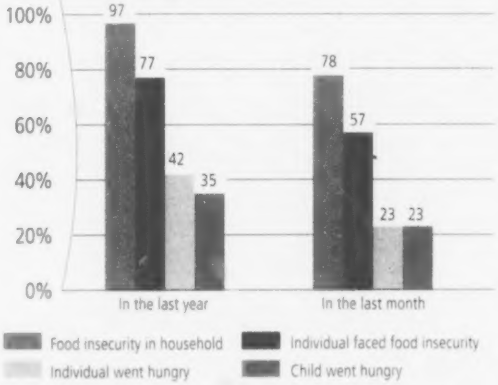
Among the younger age group, 53% have had more than one partner, and only 60% said they always used contraception over the previous six months. Among the 18 to 24 age group, 60% have had more than one partner and 68% always used contraception.

Two-thirds of both age groups used birth control pills, while 83% of the younger women and 63% of the older group used condoms. Younger women were more likely than the 18- to 24-year-olds to use pills and condoms, double protection against both sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. A minority of these sexually active young people always used condoms – 33% of those aged 15 to 17 and 19% of those aged 18 to 24. ◆

far superior to their mothers, both groups lacked sufficient calcium, vitamin D, folate and vitamin A necessary for a healthy diet. These nutrients are commonly found in milk and fresh vegetables. One of the study participants called these the "fridge foods."

Virtually all households reported insecurity in not having enough food for the family, and about one-quarter also experienced hunger. Food insecurity and hunger were more common among mothers in Nova Scotia than among those living in New Brunswick. The difference may be related to the fact that Nova Scotia claws back the National Child Tax Benefit from families who rely on social assistance and New Brunswick does not. ◆

FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER IN ATLANTIC CANADA



Source: L. McIntyre; KD Raine; NT Glanville; & JB Dayle. "Hungry Mothers of Barely Fed Children," summary report for CIHR/NHRDP & Public Health Services. Capital District Health Authority, Halifax, NS, 2001.

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR HEALTH

How do young people rate their general health? In 2000, 80% of the Canadian youth aged 16 to 24 who were asked that question said their health was good or excellent.

Twenty-nine per cent rated their health as excellent, and 51% said it was good or very good; 16% said their health was neither good nor bad, and only 4% said it was bad or terrible.

Girls were slightly more likely than boys to report their health as excellent (31% versus 26%), while boys were more likely than girls to rate their health as neither good nor bad (19% versus 14%). Youth who had post-secondary education were most likely to report their health as excellent (38%), whereas only 24% of those who had a high school education or less gave such a rating.

Young people living in high-income households were more likely than their low-income counterparts to report their health as excellent.

Young people's perceptions of their health fluctuated between 1998 and 2000. In 1998, more than a third (34.8%) of young people surveyed rated their health as excellent. In 1999, this figure declined to 27.5%, but rose to 29% in 2000.

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

With increased media coverage over the last few years about the state of the Canadian health care system, many young people are aware of health issues and concerns, including access to services. Across Canada in 2000, only 68% of youth said they were confident that if they or a family member became ill, they would have access to the necessary health care services; 14% were uncertain, and 18% were not confident that services would be available if needed.

Youth with post-secondary education were the most likely to be confident about accessing necessary health services (77%), compared with 64% of youth who had only completed high school. Young people from high-income households were much more likely than youth from lower-income households to believe they would get the health services they required.

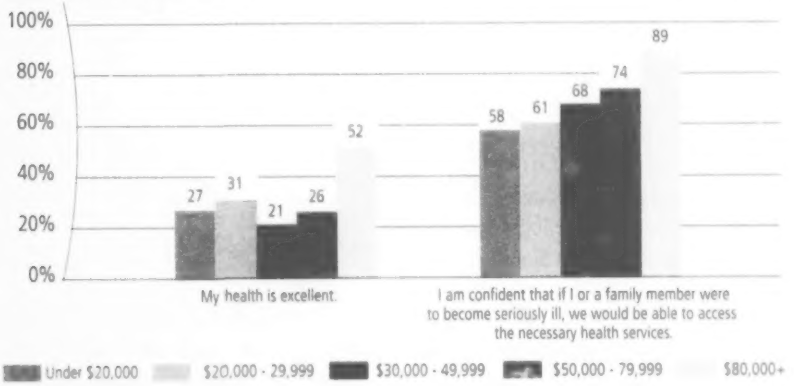
Young people living in different areas of Canada have significantly different levels of concern. Youth in British Columbia were the least likely to have faith that they would be able to access health services: fully 30% were not confident and only 59% were. By contrast, 76% of young people in the Prairies were confident about their access to health services, and only 16% were not.

Youth's confidence in their access to health services increased between 1998 and 1999, but waned again between 1999 and 2000. In 1998, 63% of youth expressed confidence, rising to 73% in 1999, then declining to 68% in 2000.

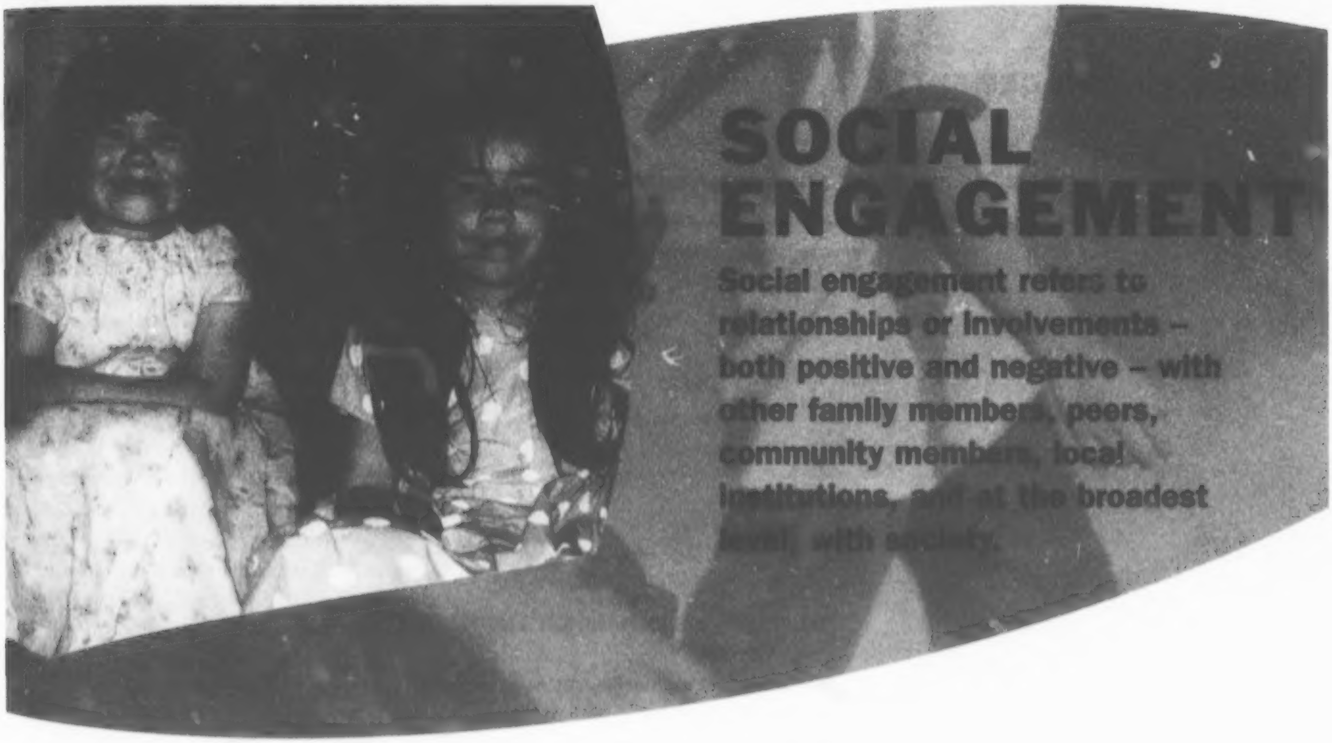
HELP WHEN ILL

Ninety-six per cent of the young people surveyed reported that if they were seriously ill at home, there was someone - such as a family member, friend or neighbour - who would look after them. Only 4% said there would be no one to help. Regardless of gender, education level, region or income, nearly all the young people felt there was someone in their lives who would help them out. ◆

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR HEALTH, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2000
Among youth aged 16-24



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using polling data from CCSD/EKOS surveys conducted for The Personal Security Index, *1999 & 2000.*



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Social engagement refers to relationships or involvements – both positive and negative – with other family members, peers, community members, local institutions, and at the broadest level, with society.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY and FRIENDS

Personal relationships with friends and family have a strong impact on young people's physical and emotional health. Youth often turn to their peers for support, and friendships are very important to them.

MAKING FRIENDS

In 1998, 92% of children aged 10 to 15 said they had many friends. Girls were only slightly more likely than boys to feel this way (93% versus 91%). Family income made no difference.

When asked about getting along with peers and making friends, most children responded positively, with children aged 10 and 11 less upbeat than those aged 12 and 13.

Girls were more likely to be upbeat about their friendships than were boys – 75% of girls and 65% of boys felt others their age wanted to be their friend; 87% of girls and 83% of boys felt they got along easily with others their age; and 83% of girls and 78% of boys thought most other kids their age liked them. Children in low-income families were slightly less likely than children in higher-income families to report that those statements were true.

What has happened over time? Between 1994 and 1998, there has been little change in this picture.

TALKING ABOUT PROBLEMS

Children aged 10 to 15 in 1998 were asked if they had someone other than friends they could talk to about problems, and 89% said yes. Ninety-three per cent of children aged 10 and 11 answered yes, compared with 89% of children aged 12 and 13, and 86% of the 14- and 15-year-olds. Girls were more likely than boys to have someone other than friends to talk to (92% and 87%, respectively). Family income made no difference in the responses, and the children's answers were about the same in 1994 and 1996 as they were in 1998.

Children aged 10 to 15 are most likely to talk to their mothers (82%) about problems, although 61% identified their fathers. As children get older, however, they are less likely to feel comfortable speaking with their mother, father or any other adult. They are more likely to turn to a brother or sister.

CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEERS, 1994, 1996, 1998

	Age group				
	10-11 yrs			12-13 yrs	
It is true or mostly true that...	**1994**	**1996**	**1998**	**1996**	**1998**
I have many friends.	88	88	89	91	93
I get along easily with others my age.	78	79	79	86	85
Others my age want me to be their friend.	66	66	66	66	69
Most other kids my age like me.	77	76	77	78	82

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996 & 1998.

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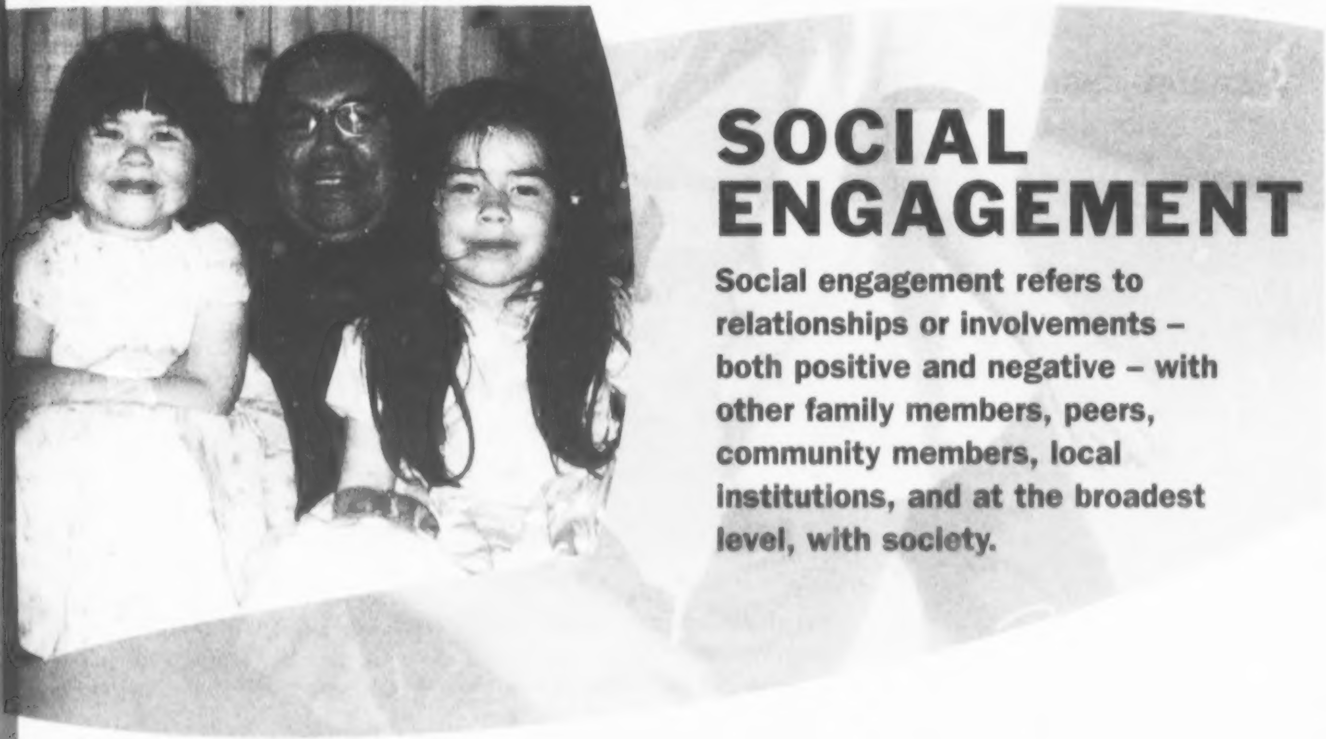

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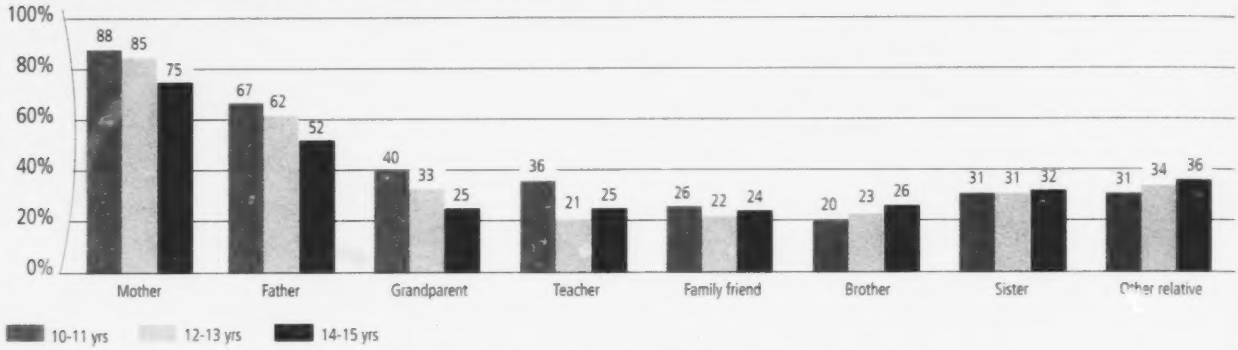
WHO DO YOU TALK TO ABOUT PROBLEMS, OTHER THAN FRIENDS?



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996 & 1998.

GETTING ALONG

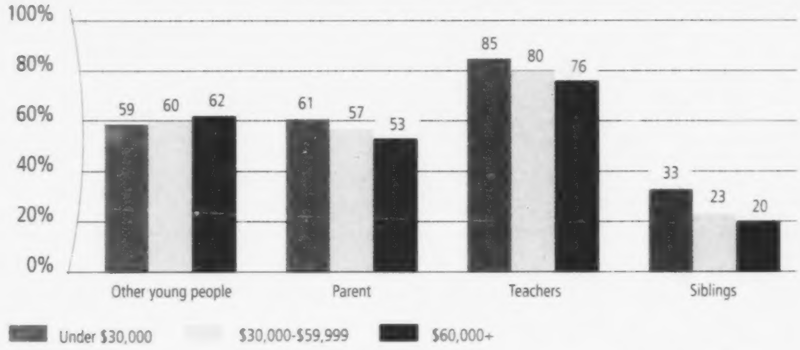
Sixty per cent of parents said their children aged 4 to 9 got along very well with other children, 57% said their parent-child relationship was very good, but only 25% reported having no problems between siblings. As children get older, relationships get more difficult. About one-third (32%) of young people aged 10 to 13 said they had no problems with their friends, 42% said the same about their mothers, and 40% said they had no problems with their fathers. Only 15% got along very well with their siblings.

Household income seems to affect these relationships for young children, but it does not seem to have the same impact on older children. These proportions have not changed much since 1994. ◆

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, BY FAMILY INCOME, 1998

For children aged 4-9

During the past six months, got along very well/no problems with:



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1994, 1996 & 1998.

Trends in youth crime

The youth crime rate increased slightly in 2000 (up 1%), after eight years of decline. The increase in the rate was driven by an increase in charges for violent crimes and other Criminal Code offences against young people aged 12 to 17.

After four years of decline, the rate of youth charged with violent crimes increased by 7% in 2000 – the largest year-over-year increase since 1991. The 2000 youth violent crime rate was 33% higher than 10 years ago. Nearly all categories of youth violent crime increased in 2000: sexual assaults (+18%), assaults (+7%), and robberies (+2%). However, the rate of youth charged with homicide dropped by 9% in 2000.

The youth property crime rate decreased by 4%, the ninth consecutive year of decline. The trend of rising rates for violent crimes and lower rates for property offences is similar to what is happening with overall crime rates.

Property crime still accounted for nearly one-half (46%) of all youth crimes, compared to 33% of adult crimes. A further 22% of youth were charged with violent crimes, compared to 31% among adults. The distribution has changed from a decade ago, when only 12% of youth were charged with violent crimes and 66% were charged with property crimes. ◆

YOUTH FEAR OF CRIME

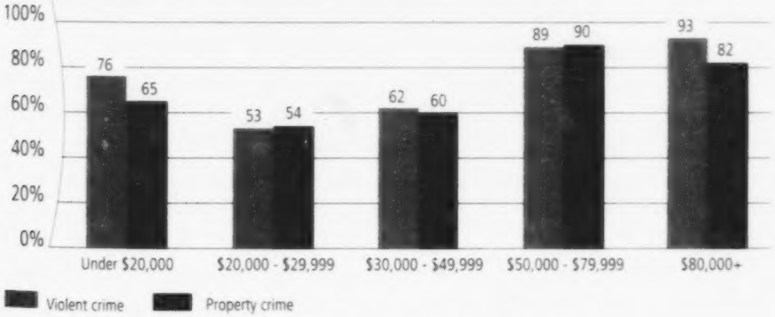
Most young people in Canada aged 16 to 24 feel that their neighbourhood is safe from violent crime and property crime. But there is considerable variation by family income and there are regional differences across the country.

Ninety-two per cent of Canadian youth in 2000 said their neighbourhood was very safe or moderately safe from violent crime, and 86% felt that way about household property crimes like break-ins. Youth living in high-income households were more likely than those in lower-income households to feel very safe from crime.

Youth living in the Atlantic provinces were the most likely to feel very safe from violent crime (87%) and property crime (87%). Quebec youth were the least likely (68%) to say their neighbourhood was very safe from property crime, and 18% said their neighbourhood was not safe from violent crime. Among youth in the Prairie provinces, 78% felt very safe from property crime, but they were the most likely to feel their neighbourhood was not safe from violent crime (18%). In Ontario, 76% of youth felt very safe from property crime, and only 6% felt their neighbourhood was not safe from violent crime. In British Columbia, one-fifth (20%) of youth felt their neighbourhood was not safe from property crime, but they were the least likely (4%) to feel it was unsafe from violent crime. In Alberta, 19% of youth felt their neighbourhood was not safe from property crime.

The proportion of youth who feel very safe from violent crime in their neighbourhood has been falling. In 1998, 78% of youth felt very safe, compared to 75% in 1999, and 74% in 2000. However, the proportion of youth who feel that their neighbourhood is unsafe has also been declining, from 9% in 1998 and 1999, to 8% in 2000. The fact that more young people are feeling "moderately safe" seems to indicate increasing uncertainty about safety. ◆

FEAR OF CRIME, BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2001
Youth aged 16-24: "My neighbourhood is very safe from crime."



Source: Canadian Council on Social Development/EKOS, Survey for the Personal Security Index, 2001.

Children's Exposure to Violence in the Media

Children and youth can be exposed to violence on television and radio, in movies and music, and on the Internet. The psychological impact of such violence on children's development depends on a number of factors. Children may respond with increased aggressiveness, increased fearfulness and anxiety about being victimized, emotional distress, or a decreased sense of self.

The NLSCY asked parents how often their children saw television shows or movies that had a lot of violence in them. In 1998, 8.9% of parents of children aged 2 to 15 said their children saw such violence "often," 41.5% said they saw it "sometimes," 30.7% said "seldom," and only 5.3% responded "never."

However, there were large differences according to the child's age. Older children were more likely than younger children to see violent TV or movies "often" or "sometimes." For example, almost one-quarter (22.5%) of children aged 14 and 15 were reported by their parents as "often" seeing violent TV or movies, compared with 9.3% of those aged 10 and 11, and 4% of children aged 6 to 9. More than half (57.4%) of two- and three-year-olds "never" see such violence, compared with 5.3% of 14- and 15-year-olds.

According to their parents, the proportion of young children who "often" see television shows or movies with a lot of violence has declined since 1994. For older children, however, it has not. ◆

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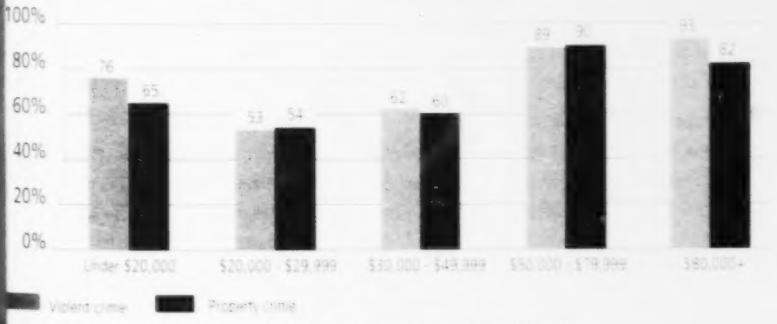

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Young People Involved in the Community

Volunteering among young people has declined in recent years. In 2000, 29% of young people aged 15 to 24 volunteered, compared to 33% in 1997. The rate of volunteering declined for all types of volunteer activities. However, young people volunteered more hours – an average of 130 hours in 2000, compared to 125 hours in 1997.

There were variations across the country. In some provinces – notably Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba – the rate declined substantially, while it increased in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

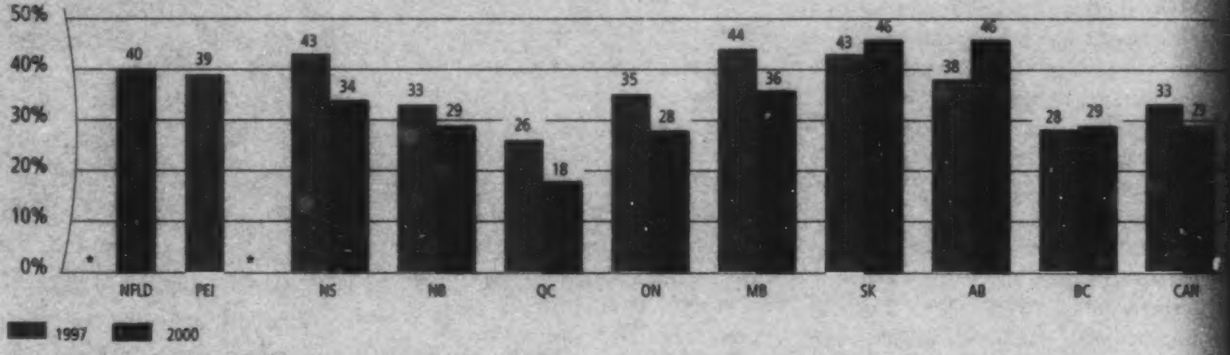
Why volunteer?

Quite a few young people volunteer because they must. Almost one in five (18%) said that some or all of the hours they contributed were required by their school, employer or the government.

Young people volunteer for different reasons than do adults. Th are more likely to volunteer to improve their job opportunities (55% compared to 16% among non-youth volunteers), which may explain the declining rate of volunteering between 1997 an 2000. During that period, the level of full-time employment for Canadians aged 15 to 24 increased by more than 15%. In the decade 1987-1997, when volunteering among young people rose, job prospects were not nearly as good.

The other main reasons youth volunteer are to explore their ow strengths (71% compared to 54% among adults) and because their friends volunteer (42% versus 28% among adults). They a less likely than adults to volunteer in order to help a cause they believe in or have been personally affected by, or to fulfill religio obligations or beliefs (19% compared to 28% for adults).

YOUNG VOLUNTEERS IN CANADA, 1997 & 2000
Youth aged 15-24



** Numbers suppressed due to small sample size.*
Source: Statistics Canada. Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2001.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

According to parents surveyed by the NLSCY in 2000, about 8% of children aged 4 to 11 – or approximately 247,000 children – have witnessed adults or teens in their home physically fighting, hitting or otherwise trying to hurt others. This rate is similar to the 9% reported in 1994 and 8% in 1996. The violence could involve siblings, parents or other adults, but in 31% of the cases, there were no teenagers in the home.

The data also show that children who witness physical fights in the home exhibit physically aggressive behaviour more often than those who have not witnessed physical fights. Similarly, they are more likely to show signs of emotional disorders and to commit delinquent acts against property.

In 1999, the General Social Survey (GSS) asked women and men about violence by their current or previous spouses or common-law partners. They were also asked if their children had witnessed this violence. According to the survey, children saw or heard assaults on a parent in an estimated 461,000 cases of spousal violence over the five-year period preceding the survey. This represented slightly more than one-third of all cases of spousal violence. About 70% of children who witnessed spousal violence saw assaults against their mothers, more than twice the rate (30%) of cases in which men were the victims.

According to the GSS, in 45% of spousal violence cases witnessed by children, the victims called police. When children were not present, victims called police in only 18% of cases. Victims contacted a social service agency in 53% of cases where children had witnessed the violence, compared with about one-quarter of cases without child witnesses.

EARLY LIFE EXPERIENCES OF ADULT VOLUNTEERS, 2000

Was active in student government	42%
Had a parent who volunteered in the community	39%
Was active in a religious organization	38%
Did some kind of volunteer work	36%
Was helped by others	35%
Belonged to a youth group	35%
Saw someone I admired helping others	34%
Did door-to-door canvassing	33%
Participated in an organized team sport	31%
All Canadian volunteers	27%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2001.

Volunteer activities

Most young people volunteer with three types of organizations – education and research, social services, and arts, culture and recreation, including sports. In 2000, 19% of youth volunteer hours went to education and research organizations, 22% went to social services, and 18% went to arts, cultural and recreational groups. (The other 41% of youth volunteer hours went to a variety of organizations.) These are very similar results to those in 1997, with one notable exception: the percentage of youth volunteer hours that went to education and research organizations declined from 29% in 1997, to 19% by 2000.

There are five main types of activities to which young volunteers in Canada give their time. In 2000:

- 53% of youth volunteers worked at organizing and supervising events, compared to 49% of youth volunteers in 1997;
- 39% did canvassing, campaigning and fundraising (43% in 1997);
- 34% did teaching or coaching (29% in 1997);
- 29% provided care, support or counselling (23% in 1997);
- 26% served as an unpaid member of a board or committee (25% in 1997).

Positive influences

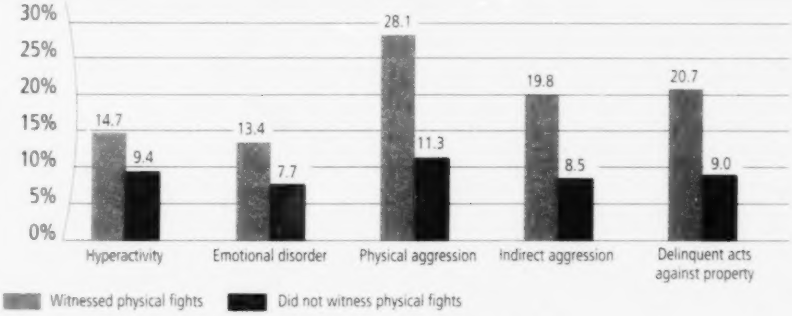
Adults are more likely to volunteer if, as a young person, they were involved in volunteering or had been exposed to it in their families. Between 1997 and 2000, however, there was a decline in the percentage of adult volunteers who had been exposed to volunteering as children – suggesting that this positive influence is waning. ◆

Women were more likely than men to call on social service agencies for help – 62% compared to 33%.

In a one-day snapshot survey taken in April 2000 by the Transition Home Survey, nearly 1,900 children were reported to be living in shelters for reasons of abuse. They made up 91% of all children in shelters on that day, and children under the age of 5 constituted the largest proportion. About half the women who took their children to shelters in 2000 said they were protecting them from witnessing their mother's abuse, 39% were protecting the child from psychological abuse, 18% from physical abuse, and 5% from sexual abuse. ◆

THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

The behaviour of children who witnessed physical fights in the home



Source: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2001.

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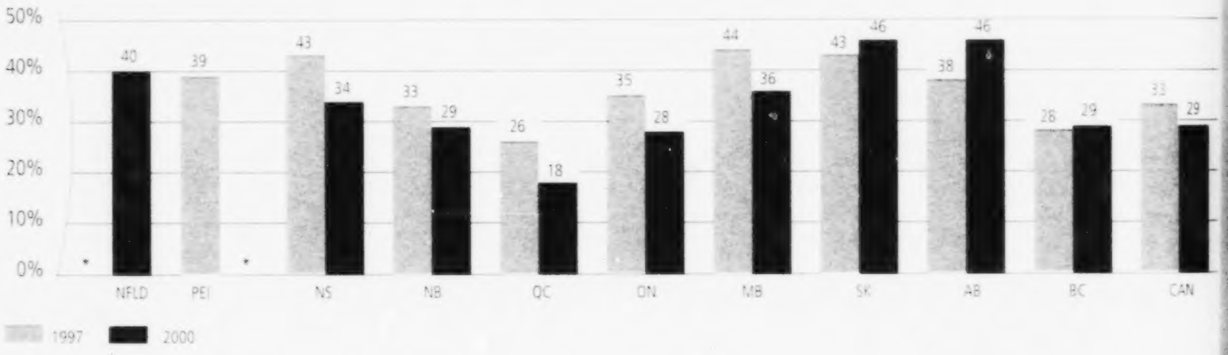

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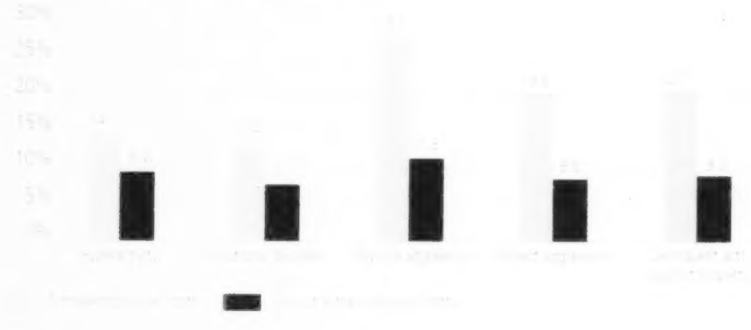


CANADIAN STUDY of CHILD ABUSE and NEGLECT

The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is the first national study on the incidence of child abuse and neglect reported to, and investigated by, child welfare services in Canada. Here are some of the highlights.

An estimated 135,573 child maltreatment investigations were conducted in 1998 by child welfare agencies in Canada, which represents a rate of 22 investigations per 1,000 children aged 0 to 15. Of these investigations, 40% involved child neglect, 31% physical abuse, 19% emotional maltreatment, and 10% involved sexual abuse.

In four of 10 substantiated cases (43%), the abuse continued for more than six months. Physical harm was documented in 17% of substantiated cases, and about one-quarter required medical treatment.

The majority of cases of physical abuse (69%) involved inappropriate punishment, and 60% involved boys. The most common form of child sexual abuse (68%) involved touching and fondling of the genitals, with girls twice as likely as boys to be victims. ◆

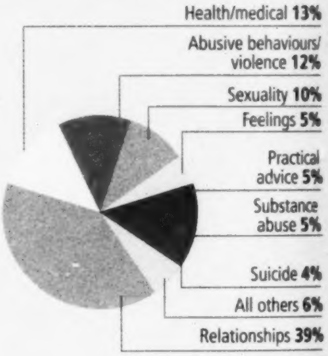
Kids Help Phone

Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) operates 24 hours a day, every day of the year offering anonymous and confidential counselling, information and referral services for children and teens.

In 2000, the Kids Help Phone received more than 363,000 calls from kids in almost 3,000 Canadian communities. This represents a 25% increase over 1999. Professional, trained counsellors answered an average of 1,000 calls every day in 2000. Hits to the Kids Help Phone website (kidshelp.sympatico.ca) also increased significantly in 2000, averaging almost 10,000 page views a day – up from 4,400 in 1998.

Children and youth call the Help Phone to talk about a range of concerns, including problems with relationships, substance abuse, homelessness and suicide. Thirty-seven per cent of the calls came from Ontario, 25% from Quebec. Seventy-six per cent of the callers were female. Thirty-six per cent were aged 10 to 14, 53% were aged 15 to 19, and 8% were youth over 20. ◆

KIDS HELP PHONE, 2000
Reasons why young people call



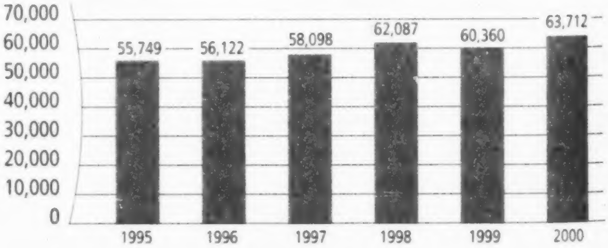
Source: Kids Help Phone Annual Report, 2000: A Year of Inspired Growth, www.kidshelp.sympatico.ca

CANADA'S MISSING CHILDREN

The number of missing children in Canada is at its highest level since 1995, and runaways are at an all-time high.

There were 63,712 missing children under age 18 in Canada in 2000. The number of reported cases of runaways and abducted children increased from 1999. More girls than boys were reported missing (59% compared to 41%). The majority of missing children were runaways. In 2000, there were 50,633 runaways, the highest ever recorded. The majority of missing children were between the ages of 14 and 17 (78%), but there were 1,195 reports of younger children, up to age 8, who were missing. ◆

MISSING CHILDREN IN CANADA, 1995-1999
Children under 18



Source: Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Annual Report on Canada's Missing Children, 2001.

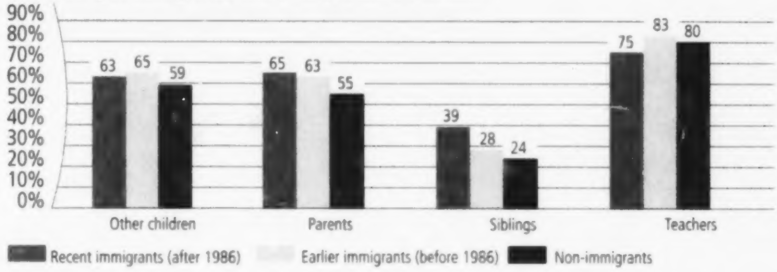
IMMIGRANT CHILDREN and THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

Children who immigrated to Canada report strong relationships with their friends, family and teachers, as do Canadian-born children. In some instances, children who were not born in Canada are faring better in those relationships.

Children who recently immigrated (since 1986) reported having more close friends than did children who came to Canada earlier and non-immigrant children. For example, 81% of recent immigrant children reported having 3 or 4 close friends, compared with 77% of non-immigrant children and 74% of earlier immigrant children. Only 5% of recent immigrant children reported having only 1 or 2 close friends, compared with 9% of non-immigrant children.

Overall, almost all children got along quite well, and did not report many problems in their relationships with their peers, siblings, parents or teachers. Immigrant children were more likely than non-immigrant children to report that they got along very well, without problems, in their relationships with family and friends. However, recent immigrant children were not as likely as their Canadian-born peers to get along with teachers without any difficulties. ◆

IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND RELATIONSHIPS, 1998
Children get along very well/no problems with...



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

Street Culture Kidz

Street Culture Kidz is a different kind of crime prevention program. From a small start as a summer activity program in 1997, it has come a long way and touched a great many young lives. Its activities are aimed at developing professional skills, but it's the philosophy of personal support for troubled kids that really makes a difference. Founder Kim Sutherland puts it this way: "We don't try to change kids – we provide an environment where kids can choose personal change."

This philosophy seems to have had a tangible and very positive impact. Other than Executive Director Sutherland, all of the 33 full-time and part-time staff are former program participants – graduates. But graduation, it should be noted, is a flexible concept at Street Culture Kidz. "We don't have a fixed age or anything for graduating kids out," says Sutherland. "Not every kid fits into a rigid time frame."

Activities at Street Culture Kidz vary widely – from face-painting at festivals, through learning to cook, to practicing office techniques. All of the activities help the kids learn marketable skills that will give them the abilities and incentives to make better choices in their behaviour.

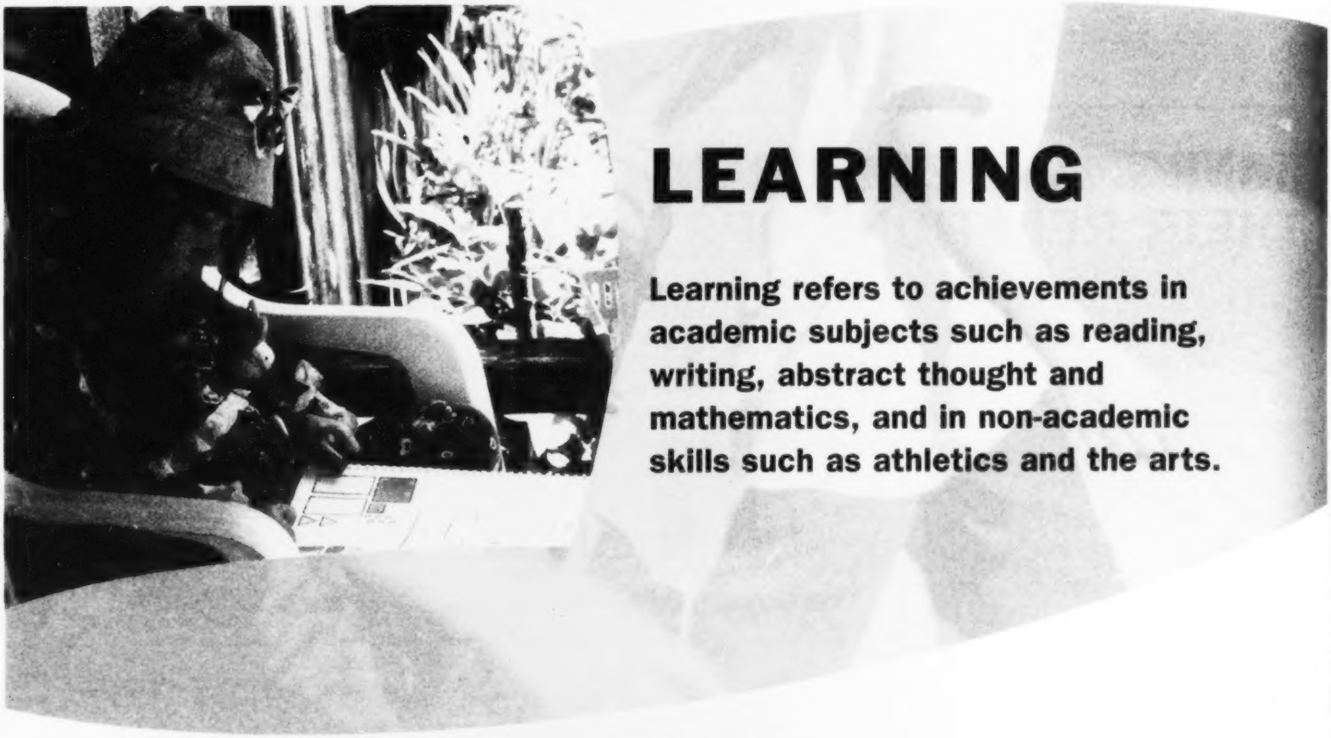
While the program has seen a lot of "difficult" youth, it has also had more than its share of success stories. Mr. Sutherland is careful, however, to give credit to the kids. "We don't take the blame for kids' bad choices, so it wouldn't be fair to take credit for their good choices. We try to provide an environment of encouragement and opportunity for them to take control of their lives. They make the changes."

Here's what some Kidz say about the program:

"I've learned how to work with the public and be appropriate in public situations." – Jennifer, 16

"I can now create a future for myself." - Wayne, 19

"Whether or not I have the 'right stuff' for a role model, for the first time in my life I realize that I am one." - Anonymous ◆



LEARNING

Learning refers to achievements in academic subjects such as reading, writing, abstract thought and mathematics, and in non-academic skills such as athletics and the arts.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

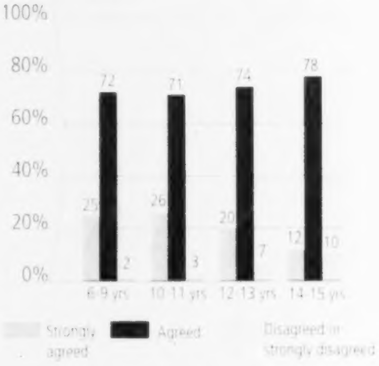
Children's success in school is associated with the support they receive from their parents – in terms of parental expectations, hands-on help with learning, and involvement in their children's school life. Canadian parents tend to be most involved in school when their children are young.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

By and large, Canadian parents place high value on their children's learning at school. When asked how important academic progress in school was, 42% of parents of children aged 6 to 9 and 43% of parents with children aged 10 to 11 strongly agreed that academic performance was important. However, among parents of children aged 12 to 13, the importance of academic progress in school declined to 39%, and it dropped to 36% for parents with children aged 14 to 15.

Asked if their children enjoy being in school, one-quarter of parents of children aged 6 to 11 strongly agreed. The proportion declined as the child's age increased, dropping to 12% among parents of 14- and 15-year-olds.

CHILDREN'S ENJOYMENT OF SCHOOL, BY AGE, 1998
Parents were asked about the statement, "Most children enjoy being at school."



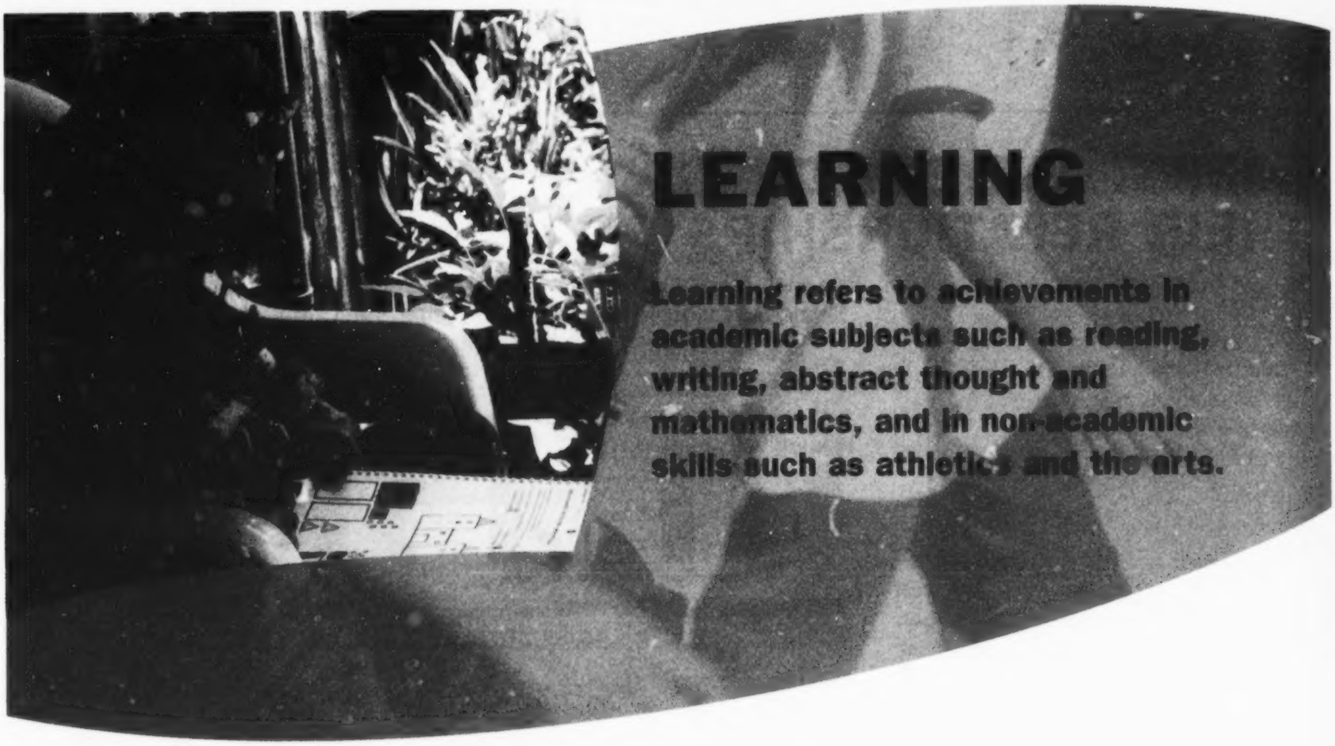
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

Parental involvement in school also drops off as their children get older. Forty-two per cent of parents of children aged 6 to 11 strongly agreed that the school offered them the opportunity for involvement, compared with 29% of parents of children aged 12 to 13 and 15% of parents of children aged 14 to 15. When parents were asked whether they had spoken to, visited or corresponded with their child's teacher, 94% of parents with children aged 4 and 5 and 91% of those with children aged 6 to 9 said yes, compared with 86% of parents with children aged 10 to 11 and 61% of parents with children aged 14 and 15.

PARENTAL HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

Most parents have high aspirations for their children. When asked how far they hoped their child would go in their educational studies, 83% of parents of 4- and 5-year-olds said they hoped their children would go on to university. That dropped slightly to 74% among parents with children aged 6 to 11, and to 70% among parents with teens aged 14 and 15.

Financial barriers limit the expectations of parents in lower-income families. Thirty-nine per cent of parents with a family income below $30,000 hoped their children would go to university, compared with 62% of parents with incomes over $60,000.



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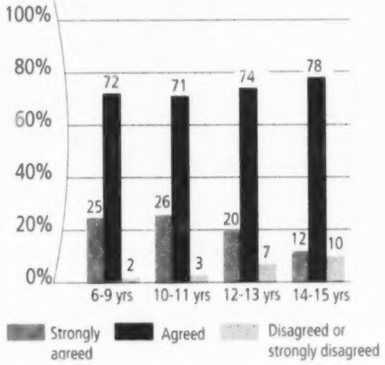

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HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of every child's education, and there is evidence that parental involvement in homework improves a child's success at school. Sixty-six per cent of parents with children aged 6 to 9 said they checked their child's homework daily, compared to 48% of parents with children aged 10 to 11, 30% of parents of children aged 12 to 13, and only 13% of those with children aged 14 and 15. Parents who talk daily to their children about school and about their friends dropped from 80% for parents of children aged 4 to 5, to 64% of those with children aged 10 to 11, and to 51% for parents with children aged 14 and 15.

GENDER AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Parents were more likely to report that their girls, more than their boys, were doing well in school. For example, 53% of parents reported that their girls did very well in language arts and grammar, compared to only 31% for boys. Forty-three per cent said their girls did very well on written composition, compared to 28% for boys. There was a similar gender gap in reading (54% for girls and 42% for boys) and in science (43% and 33%, respectively). For overall school performance, 50% of parents rated their girls as doing very well, compared to 36% of boys. Not surprisingly, 87% reported that their girls liked school, compared with 76% for boys.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING OVER TIME?

Between 1996 and 1998, the NLSCY shows that parental involvement in school is declining in several areas, but parental expectations for their children's future education are rising.

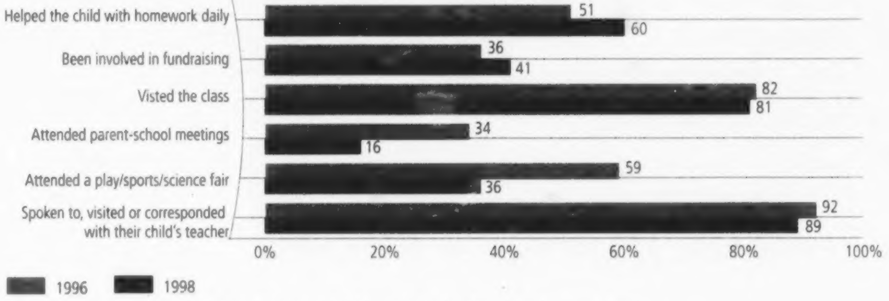
Parents were less likely to have attended a play, sports events, science fair or school meeting, but they were just as likely to have visited their child's classroom, and they were more likely to help their children with homework daily.

One key area where parents have become more involved is in school fundraising, which must be interpreted as a direct result of the decreasing resources available to schools.

Parents were less likely to report that school spirit was very high – from 41% in 1994, to 38% in 1996 and only 33% in 1998. Since 1994, the proportion of parents who report that their children are doing very well in school overall and in a variety of subjects has declined. They were also less likely to report that most children enjoyed being in the school.

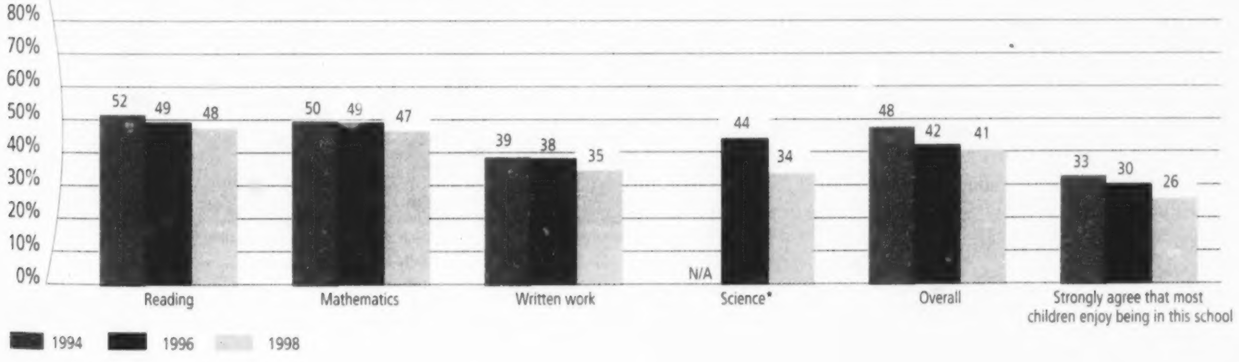
The proportion of parents who felt that good grades were important has increased. Among parents of children aged 6 to 11, it increased from 56% in 1994, to 60% in 1996 and to 64% in 1998. The proportion of parents who hoped that their children would go on to university remained high, at approximately 75% between 1994 and 1998. ◆

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS, 1996 & 1998
Parents of children aged 6-11 who have done the following with their child or in the child's school:



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1996 & 1998.

CHILDREN'S SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, 1994, 1996 & 1998
Parental reports that their child (aged 6-11) is doing well in:



**For children aged 12 & 13*
Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1994, 1996 & 1998.

It's a wired, wired world

So you think you know what your child is doing on the Internet? A recent cross-Canada survey of young Internet users may be an eye-opener.

The survey, done by the Media Awareness Network with financial support from the federal government, shows that parents' impressions of how kids spend their time on-line contrasts sharply with what children and youth actually report. *Young Canadians in a Wired World* is billed as the most comprehensive and wide-ranging survey of its kind to date, with more than 5,600 students aged 9 to 17 responding.

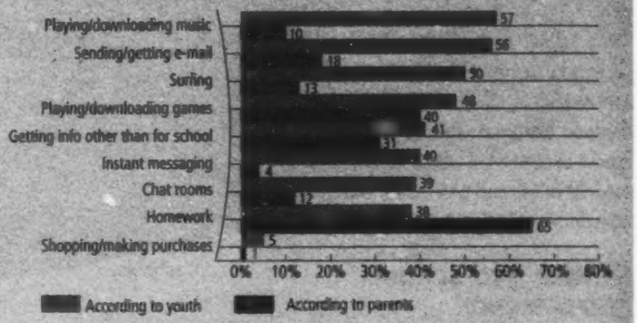
When asked what their children do on the Internet, the most frequent answer from Canadian parents is "homework" (65%). By contrast, children place homework near the bottom of the list (38%), behind such activities as downloading music (57%), sending e-mail (56%), web surfing (50%), and playing games (48%).

While parents report that their children rarely use chat rooms (12%) or instant messaging (4%), 40% of the children say they have used chat rooms and 39% have used instant messaging. Fifty-four per cent of children report at least some use of adult chat rooms, while 57% report talking to people they have met only on the Internet via instant messaging.

Most of the young people surveyed said their parents do not discuss their Internet use with them very much and that there were few specific rules about its use at home. Many youth felt that they knew more about the Internet than did their parents: half the youth surveyed said they knew more about the Internet than their parents, with only 23% reporting that their parents knew more about it than they did.

For more information, visit the MNet website at www.media-awareness.ca. ◆

WHAT DO KIDS DO ON THE NET?



Source: Environics Research Group. Young Canadians in a Wired World: The Students' View, *p. 25, June 2001.*

WHO DO KIDS TALK TO ON THE NET?
When you use instant messaging, how often do you talk to the following people...?

	Often	Sometimes	Never	Don't know
Friends	66	22	6	7
People met only on the Internet	21	36	36	7
Family members	13	38	42	7

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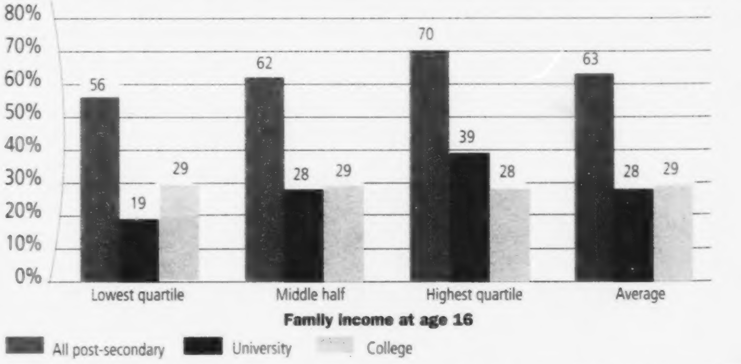
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND FAMILY INCOME

Young people from high-income families were twice as likely as those from low-income families to participate in university education (39% compared to 19%). While young people aged 18 to 21 from low-income homes were less likely to have ever enrolled in any form of post-secondary education, the gap was particularly pronounced for university enrollment. Among families with the highest incomes, 70% of young people had participated in some form of post-secondary education by 1998 – university, college, trade or vocational schools. ◆

Post-secondary Education & Family Income, 1998
Youth aged 18-21, highest level of educational participation



Source: Statistics Canada. "Participation in post-secondary education and family income - erratum," in The Daily, *January 9, 200*

LEARNING OUTCOMES AMONG IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

How are immigrant children doing in school? According to NLSCY data, they are doing just as well as non-immigrant children, and children in families which immigrated before 1986 are doing very well.

Based on parental reports, a child's immigrant status had little effect on their performance in math. In science subjects, children who had immigrated before 1986 were more likely than non-immigrant children to be doing very well (44% compared to 38%). Children who were recent immigrants (that is, since 1986) were the least likely to be doing well in science (28%).

Differences in performance were much smaller for reading and written work, such as composition, but the pattern was similar. In all the categories, the proportion of children who performed poorly was almost the same.

Immigrant children, especially recent immigrant children, are more excited about going to school than are non-immigrant children. Among children in recent immigrant families, 71% almost always looked forward to going to school, compared to 69% of children from earlier immigrant families and 63% of non-immigrant children. Among non-immigrant or Canadian-born children, 8% rarely looked forward to going to school, while 6% of children from earlier immigrant families and 3% of recent immigrants felt that way.

Immigrant parents in general, and especially recent immigrants, attach a higher importance to their children getting good grades in school than do non-immigrant parents. Almost twice as many immigrant children (8%) as non-immigrant children (4%) reported receiving help at school, and the proportion was higher still (12%) for children of recent immigrant families. Among those who received help more than twice a week, 23% were recent immigrants, 18% were non-immigrants, and 16% were children from earlier immigrant families. ◆

IMMIGRANT AND NON-IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL, 1998, Based on parental reports

Child is doing very well...	Recent (after 1986)	Immigrants before 1986	Total	Non-immigrants
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overall	40%	47%	45%	43%
Child almost always looks forward to going to school	71%	69%	69%	63%
Good grades in school are very important	84%	68%	71%	61%

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Council on Social Development using microdata from Statistics Canada's NLSCY. 1998.

Children with special needs at school

New research by the CCSD based on NLSCY data suggests that there is reason for concern about the lack of opportunities and supports available to children and youth with special needs.

These children are not integrated and included socially or academically at the same level as their peers without special needs, and their experiences at school are consistently less positive. Students with special needs miss more school, they change schools more often, they perceive themselves as not doing as well at school (as do their parents), they feel somewhat less positively about school, and they are slightly less likely to look forward to going to school. While the differences are not large, they are consistently in the same negative direction.

The good news is that students with special needs are more likely to get extra help in school and to receive some special education programs, but it is impossible from these data to determine if the amount of help they receive is sufficient to their needs.

The majority of children with or without special needs were said to be doing very well or well in school, according to their parents. However, only 66.7% of children with special needs were reported to be doing well or very well, compared with 77.3% of children with no special needs. Children with special needs are more likely than other kids to be doing poorly in school, according to their parents. ◆

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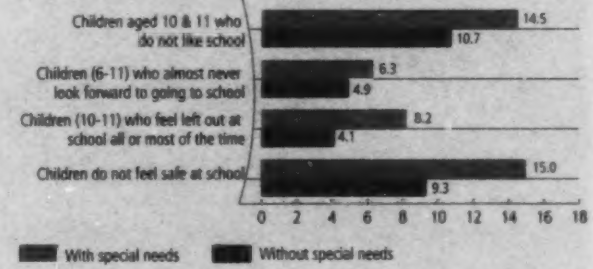

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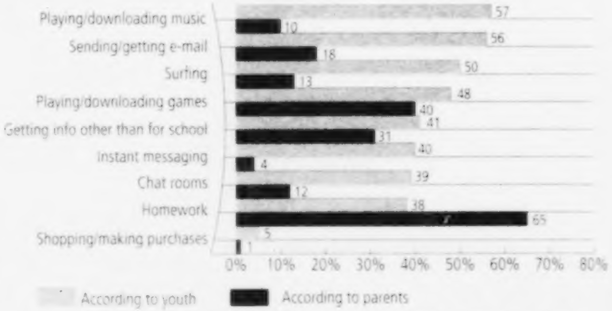

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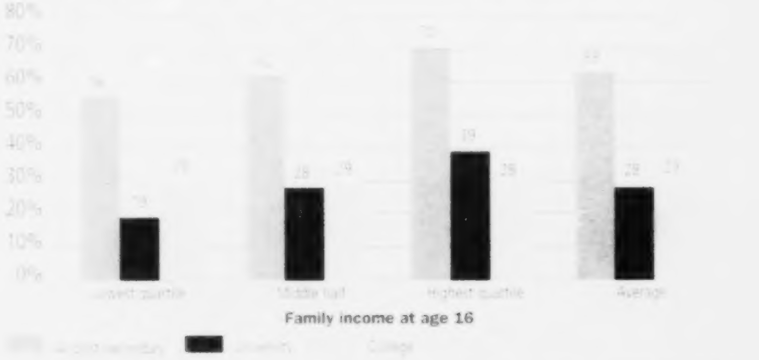

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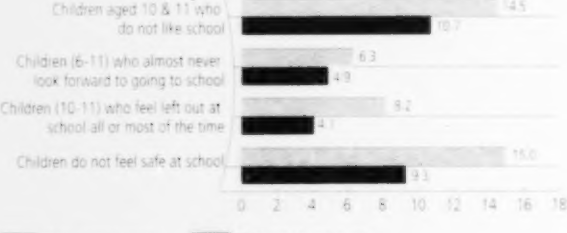

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1994.

International Learning Outcomes

Canada participates in a number of standardized international testing programs. They provide an indication of how Canadian children are doing in comparison with those in other OECD countries.

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study provides a basis for comparing the achievements of students at about age 13. In 1999, Canada ranked 6th in mean mathematics scores, behind Korea and Japan but ahead of the U.S. and Britain. Canada ranked 9th in mean science scores. Canadian students improved their mean scores between 1995 and 1999 – by 10 points in math and 19 points in science.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) will regularly measure the achievements of 15-year-old students in reading, math and science. The test was given for the first time in 2000. According to PISA, Canadian students ranked 2nd in reading, 6th in math, and 5th in science among the 32 countries surveyed. Canada was among the few countries which scored near the top in all three subjects.

Only students in Finland performed significantly better than Canadian students in reading. Students in Japan and Korea performed significantly better in mathematics, and students in Korea, Japan and Finland performed significantly better in science.

In all participating countries, students from higher socio-economic backgrounds performed better than did students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Canadian students in the 25% of families with the lowest socio-economic status scored about the average for all students in the OECD member countries.

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Girls performed significantly better than boys on the reading test in all countries and in all Canadian provinces. Students' enjoyment of reading and their career expectations were two characteristics that were consistently and positively related to reading. Among family characteristics, the socio-economic background of the family and the number of books in the home were factors which influenced reading achievements.

In schools where the majority of students came from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the students did not perform as well as students in other schools where there were higher socio-economic backgrounds. Students attending schools that had fewer disciplinary problems or fewer disruptions in the classroom tended to have higher scores. ◆

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN GRADE 8 ACHIEVEMENTS

	Math (mean score)		
	1995	**1999**	**Difference**
Korea	581	587	6
Japan	581	579	-2
Belgium	550	558	8
Netherlands	529	540	11
Hungary	527	532	5
Canada	521	531	10
Australia	519	525	6
Czech Republic	546	520	-26
United States	492	502	9
England	498	496	-1
New Zealand	501	491	-10
Italy	491	485	-6

	Science (mean score)		
	1995	**1999**	**Difference**
Hungary	537	552	16
Japan	554	550	-5
Korea	546	549	3
Netherlands	541	545	3
Australia	527	540	14
Czech Republic	555	539	-16
England	533	538	5
Belgium	533	535	2
Canada	514	533	19
United States	513	515	2
New Zealand	511	510	-1
Italy	497	498	1

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators, *2001 Edition.*

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

By the age of 20, the vast majority of Canadian youth (85%) have graduated from high school. About 70% of high school graduates between the ages of 18 and 20 go on to post-secondary education, according to the Youth in Transition Survey.

The national high school dropout rate among 20-year-olds was 12% in 1999. The dropout rate was much higher among men (14.7%) than among women (9.2%). This means that by the age of 20, about 15% of Canadian men are failing to meet what many people consider to be the minimum educational standard today.

Provincial high school dropout rates are varied. Compared to other provinces, dropout rates were relatively low in Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and Ontario, and relatively high in Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Manitoba.

The high school dropout rate is estimated to have been 18% in 1991, compared to 12% in 1999, according to the School Leavers Survey. The decline was greater among men than women. From the early to the late 1990s, the dropout rate declined in every province and for most provinces, the decline was substantial.

These findings concur with other nationally representative data on high school dropout rates among youth. For example, data from the Labour Force Survey on a slightly older group of youth (aged 20 to 24), show that the high school dropout rate decreased from 16.4% in 1991 to 11.9% in 1999.

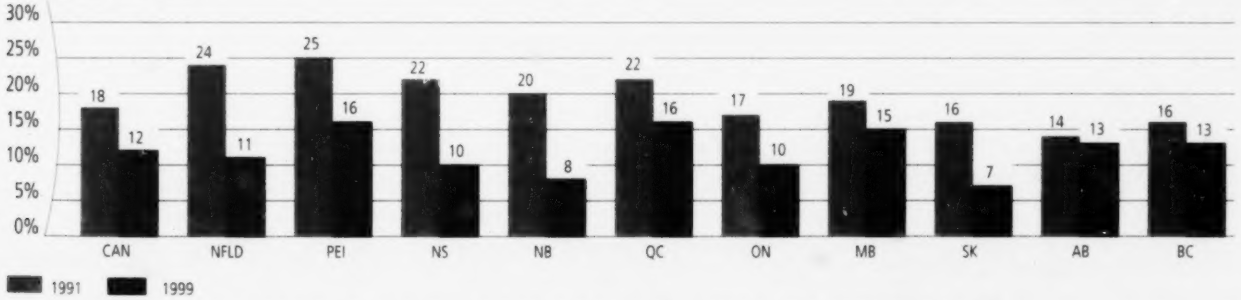
High school dropouts are more likely than graduates to come from single-parent families, and the proportion of dropouts whose parents had not completed high school was three times that of graduates. Dropouts, especially males, obtained lower grades, on average, than graduates. But academic difficulty is not the only reason for dropping out. Almost half of dropouts had a B average.

Compared to graduates, dropouts were less engaged in school, both academically and socially. They were less likely to have had close friends who pursued further education beyond high school, and they were more likely to have engaged in such behaviours as skipping classes, drinking alcohol regularly, and using drugs frequently.

While school-related reasons dominated the decision to drop out, other factors also played a role. For young men, wanting to work was an important consideration, as was pregnancy and child-rearing in the case of some young women. Three-quarters of those who had dropped out later expressed regret over their decision.

High school graduates were more likely than dropouts to have had a paid job during their last year of high school. Dropout rates were lowest among students who had worked a moderate number of hours each week and highest for those who worked the equivalent of full-time hours. Male dropouts who had worked during high school were the most likely to have worked long hours. ◆

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES, BY PROVINCE, 1991 & 1999
Among 20-year-olds

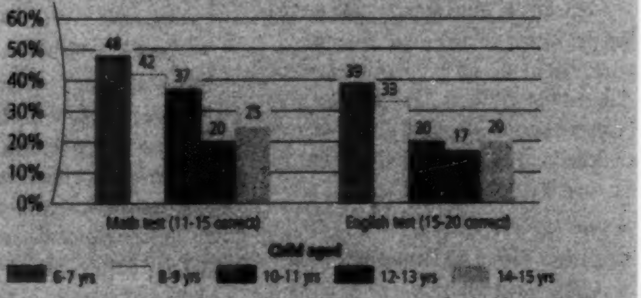


Source: Human Resources Development Canada & Statistics Canada. At a Crossroads: First Results for the 18- to 20-year-old Cohort of the Youth in Transition Survey, *2002.*

Math and Reading Scores

In 1998, 41% of children aged 6 to 11 scored 11 out of 15 or better on a math test at school. This compares with 40% in 1996. Among children in this age group, 29% scored 15 out of 20 or better on reading tests, compared with 17% in 1996. In both math and reading, younger children did better than older ones. ◆

MATH & ENGLISH SCORES, BY AGE GROUP, 1998



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

International Learning Outcomes

Canada participates in a number of standardized international testing programs. They provide an indication of how Canadian children are doing in comparison with those in other OECD countries.

The Third International Mathematics and Science Study provides a basis for comparing the achievements of students at about age 13. In 1999, Canada ranked 6th in mean mathematics scores, behind Korea and Japan but ahead of the U.S. and Britain. Canada ranked 9th in mean science scores. Canadian students improved their mean scores between 1995 and 1999 – by 10 points in math and 19 points in science.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) will regularly measure the achievements of 15-year-old students in reading, math and science. The test was given for the first time in 2000. According to PISA, Canadian students ranked 2nd in reading, 6th in math, and 5th in science among the 32 countries surveyed. Canada was among the few countries which scored near the top in all three subjects.

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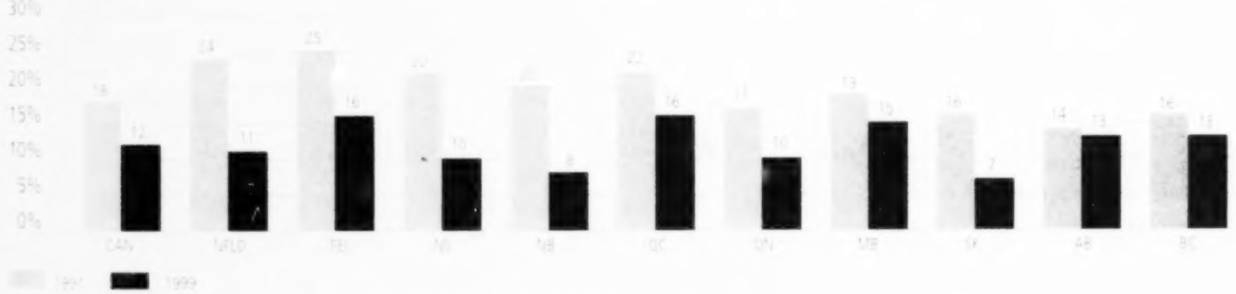

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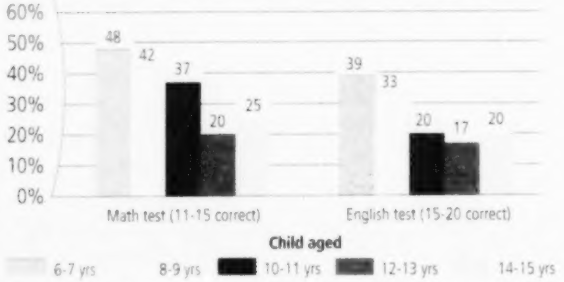


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

WHAT DO CHILDREN THINK ABOUT SCHOOL?

In 1998, just over one-third (34%) of children aged 10 and 11 said that they liked school a lot – virtually unchanged from 1994 (33%). However, when 12- and 13-year-olds were asked the same question, only one in five said they liked school very much (unchanged from 1996) and only 15% of children aged 14 and 15 felt that way. Girls liked school more than did boys.

In 1998, three-quarters of children aged 10 and 11 felt that it was very important to do well in school, up from 68% in 1994. Eighty per cent of those aged 12 and 13 felt that way, as did two-thirds of those aged 14 and 15. But fewer felt that they actually were doing very well in school, and this proportion declined with age: only 36% of children aged 10 and 11 felt they were doing very well in school (unchanged from 1994), as did 31% of those aged 12 and 13, and 26% of children aged 14 and 15.

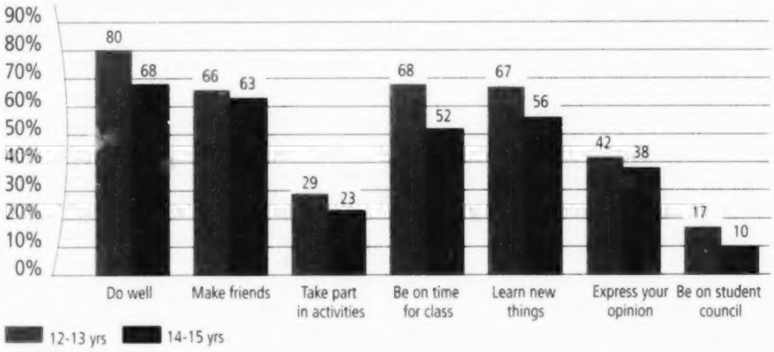
Kids aged 12 to 15 felt it was more important to make friends in school than to take part in activities or to express their opinion.

HOW DO GIRLS & BOYS FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL?
Canadian children aged 10-15, 1998

	Girls	Boys
I like school very much.	27%	18%
I like school quite a bit.	38%	36%
I like school a bit.	23%	27%
I don't like school very much.	8%	12%
I hate school.	4%	7%
I don't like school very much / hate it.	12%	19%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

IN SCHOOL, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO:
Responses of youth aged 12-15, 1998



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

HOW DO THEY LIKE THEIR STUDIES?

The NLSCY asks children how they feel about the subjects they study in school. Just over four in 10 (43%) students aged 10 to 15 said they liked math a lot, but this declined with age. Boys were more likely than girls to like math – 46% compared with 40%.

When children were asked to rate how much they liked English, the overall results were very positive. Seventy-nine per cent of children aged 10 to 15 said they either liked the subject a lot or a bit. Of the remaining 21%, 14% did not like English very much and 6% hated it. As the children grew older, the popularity of this subject decreased. Among children 10 to 11 years, 52% said they liked English a lot and 34% liked it a bit. Among students aged 14 and 15, 36% liked English a lot and 40% liked it a bit.

When it came to French, 31% of students aged 10 to 15 liked it a lot and 35% liked it a bit. Again, liking this subject a lot declined with age. Children also liked physical education and fine arts more than they liked the academic subjects.

SKIPPING SCHOOL AND DISCIPLINE

How often do children skip school? An overwhelming majority (86%) of students aged 12 to 15 said they never skipped school, while 14% said they had done it more than once. Within that age group, 94% of students aged 12 and 13 said they never skipped school, while 79% of those aged 14 and 15 also said they had never skipped school.

When students aged 12 to 15 were asked how many classes they had skipped in the previous month, 83% said none, and 17% reported one or more classes skipped. Age was again a factor. Among students aged 12 to 13, 93% reported never having skipped a class in the previous month, compared to 74% among 14- and 15-year-olds.

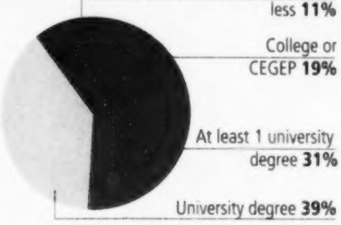
The vast majority of students aged 12 to 15 (95%) had never been suspended from school. The other 5% had received one or more suspensions. Rates of suspension did not vary by age group.

HOW DO STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT THEIR TEACHERS?

About half of students aged 10 to 15 said they got extra help from their teachers all of the time. For example, 49% of the 10 to 11 age group said they always received extra help in 1998, up from 42% in 1994. Among those aged 12 to 13, 53% received extra help all the time, up from 48% in 1996. The proportion among those aged 14 and 15 was 45%.

The majority (59%) of younger children (aged 10 and 11) felt their teachers treated them fairly all of the time, but this was down from 65% in 1994. Only 48% of

STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the NLSCY, 1998.

12- and 13-year-olds felt they were treated fairly all of the time, and this fell to 33% among those aged 14 and 15.

STUDY AT HOME

Three-quarters of students aged 10 to 15 have a place to study at home all of the time, and this has been consistent over time. Younger students were twice as likely as older students to say that they always did their homework.

The majority of students said they got support from their parents, but this seems to be declining among younger children. In 1998, 68% of students aged 10 and 11 reported that their parents helped them with their school work all of the time, whereas in 1994 and 1996, the proportion was 74%. Among students aged 12 to 13, 70% reported having parental help in 1998 (similar to 1996), as did 64% of those aged 14 and 15. More than 85% of children aged 10 to 15 said their parents always encouraged them to do well, and only 12-14% said their parents always expected too much of them at school.

SCHOOL ASPIRATIONS

When students between the ages of 12 and 15 were asked how far they hoped to go in school, the majority had very high expectations – 70% of the children hoped to attain at least one or more university degrees. The younger children (those aged 12-13) were more likely than the older children to aspire to a university education – 73% compared with 68%. ◆

Youth and Post-secondary Education

A total of 719,900 young people enrolled in Canadian universities as undergraduate students in 1999/2000, up 1.7% from 1998/99. This was the second consecutive annual increase but well short of the record of 771,300 set in 1992/93. Undergraduate enrollment had declined for five consecutive years following that peak, due almost entirely to a 19% drop in enrollment among part-time undergraduate students.

Among young people aged 18 to 24, 14.2% were enrolled in full-time undergraduate studies in 1999/2000, about the same proportion as in 1992/93. However, the participation rates have declined slightly among men and increased slightly among women.

Women consolidated their majority, accounting for 57% of all full-time undergraduate students aged 18 to 24, up from 54% in 1992/93. They were the only group of students whose enrollment increased during this seven-year period.

Enrollment in full-time studies was up in five provinces between 1992/93 and 1999/00. The largest increase was in British Columbia, where the number of full-time students climbed by 19%. Full-time registrations also increased in Alberta (10%), Saskatchewan (5%), Manitoba (1%) and Ontario (3%), and declined by 1% in Nova Scotia and Quebec, and by 6% in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Part-time enrollment was down in 8 of the 10 provinces, with only Alberta (45%) and BC (19%) seeing increases.

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PARTICIPATION RATES IN UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS, 1992/93 to 1999/00
Among students aged 18-24

	1992/93	1998/99	1999/00
Full-time			
Men	12.5	12.0	11.8
Women	15.6	16.7	16.7
Total	14.0	14.3	14.2
Part-time			
Men	2.1	1.9	1.9
Women	2.9	2.6	2.6
Total	2.5	2.2	2.2

Source: Statistics Canada. "University Enrolment, 1999/2000," in The Daily, *November 8, 2001.*

SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT INDICATORS PROGRAM

In 2001, the Council of Ministers of Education tested 41,000 Canadian students aged 13 and 16 in mathematics. Results for both age groups did not meet the levels expected by a pan-Canadian panel of representatives from various sectors of society.

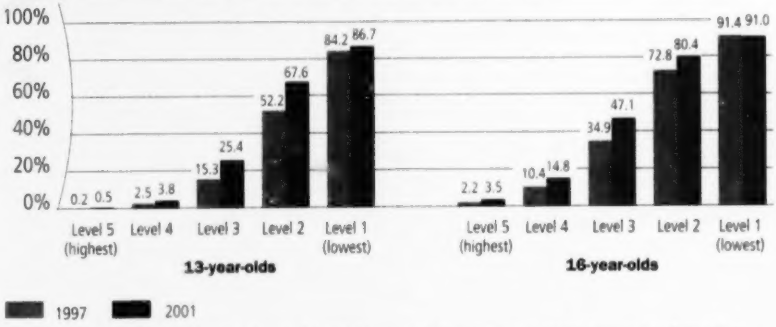
The students were measured against five levels of achievement, ranging from the very early stages of mathematical knowledge – typical of early elementary education – through to the knowledge and skills acquired by a student who has completed a full range of specialized mathematics courses at or near the end of secondary school. For each level of achievement, students were tested on their knowledge of math concepts and a demonstration of problem-solving abilities. The same test was given in 1997.

In math concepts, more 13-year-olds and 16-year-olds in 2001 achieved Level 2 than had been the case in 1997, but fewer 16-year-olds reached Level 3. In problem-solving, more students in both age groups achieved Levels 2, 3, 4, and 5 in 1997 than in 2001. This change was particularly notable among 13-year-olds.

There were small differences in achievement between boys and girls in math concepts. Slightly more 13-year-old boys than girls achieved Levels 4 and 5, and more 16-year-old boys than girls achieved Levels 3, 4, and 5. In problem solving for 13-year-olds, more girls than boys achieved Level 2, and among 16-year-olds, slightly more boys than girls achieved Level 5.

Thirteen-year-olds in Alberta outperformed Canadian students overall in both math concepts and problem-solving, and French 13-year-olds in Quebec outperformed Canadians overall in content. Among 16-year-olds, Alberta students again outperformed Canadians overall in both categories, as did French students in Manitoba. ◆

MATH PROBLEM-SOLVING KNOWLEDGE, 1997 & 2001



Source: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), Report on Mathematics III Assessment, 2001. *Public Report, 2002.*

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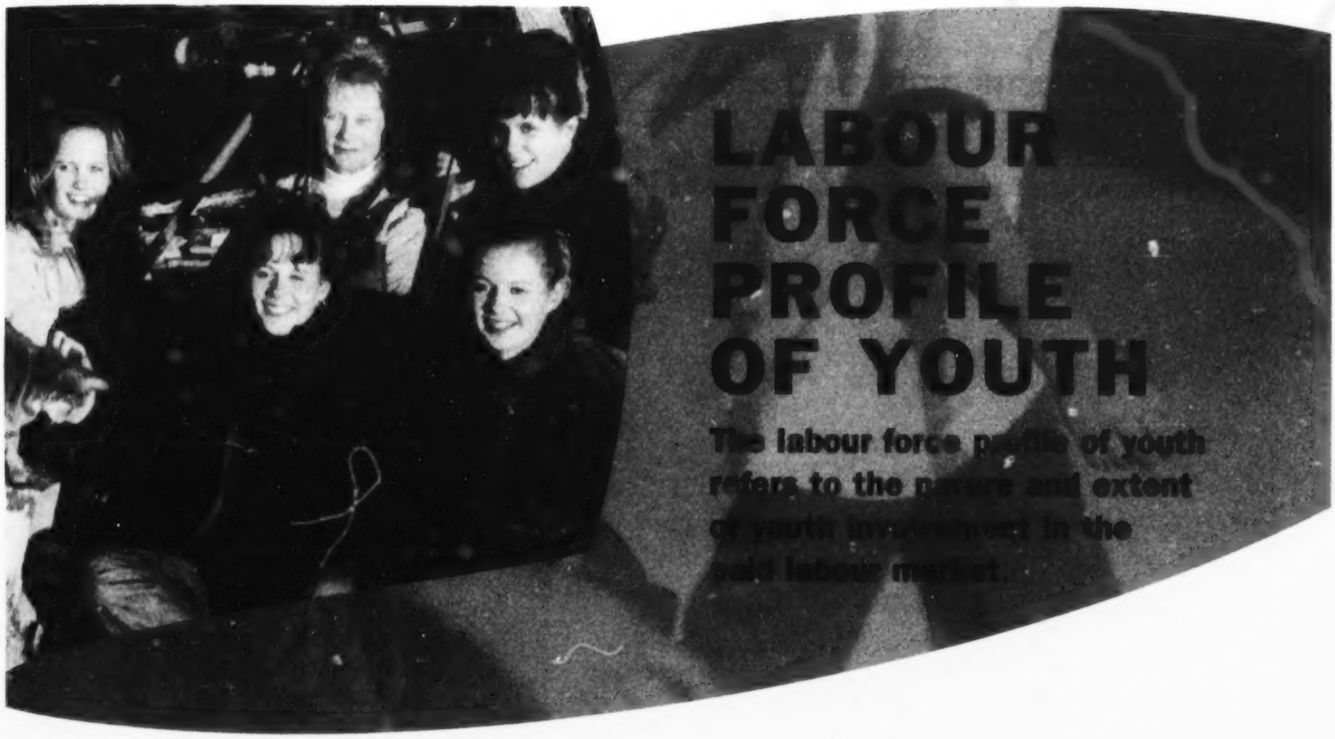
Young people's experiences

The Youth in Transition Survey found that, among high school graduates aged 18 to 20 who had pursued post-secondary education, 7% had graduated, 9% had left, and 84% were still attending. Higher percentages of women were continuing their post-graduate studies or had graduated. Among both men and women, those who were continuing their studies or had graduated were more likely to have lived with both parents while in high school, and they tended to come from families where one or both parents had a university degree.

Just under half of the young people surveyed said they faced barriers in continuing their education as far as they might like, and about two-thirds of those cited financial barriers. Additional barriers included not being able to get into the program they wanted or having marks that were too low; not enough interest or motivation; and in the case of high school dropouts, wanting to work or needing to care for their own children.

Students relied on a wide variety of funding sources for their post-secondary education, with the most common source being earnings from employment. In comparing post-secondary graduates with those who had left their studies, higher percentages of graduates also reported receiving money from their parents or partner, from scholarships, awards or prizes, from personal savings, and from government-sponsored student loans. Among those who had applied for a government-sponsored student loan, close to 20% said they had been rejected at least once.

Close to half of the students who participated in post-secondary education had attended a community college or CEGEP in their first year, about one-third had attended university, and the balance had attended other non-university post-secondary institutions such as technical, trade or vocational schools, or private business or training schools. They generally had positive attitudes and relationships during their first post-secondary year, but among those who subsequently left their post-secondary studies, they tended to be much less positive about how well the post-secondary program had fit with their needs and aspirations. ◆



LABOUR FORCE PROFILE OF YOUTH

The labour force profile of youth refers to the nature and extent of youth involvement in the paid labour market.

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Last year's *Progress* presented a detailed analysis of trends in youth employment and unemployment from 1989 to 1999. We follow up that analysis with data from 2000 that show continued and gradual improvement in the job picture for young people.

Teens aged 15 to 19, who are usually in school full-time, can benefit from summer jobs and part-time work as long as the hours of work are reasonable. Combining work with school helps teens make the transition into full-time work later, and it gives them some independent income. By the time youth reach age 20 to 24, the great majority seek work at least part-time or part-year, in order to help pay for their studies and gain job experience.

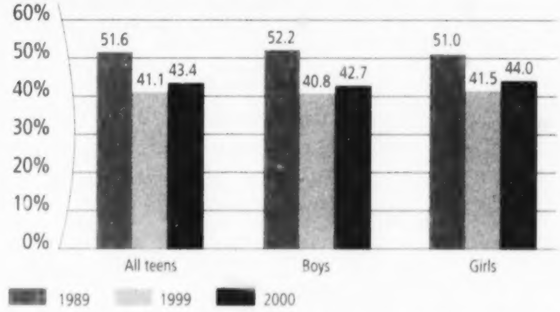
MORE JOBS FOR TEENS

In 2000, the unemployment rate for teens again improved from the year before, dropping from 18.2% to 16.3%. But conditions still remained much less desirable than they had been in 1989, the peak year before the recession of the 1990s when teen unemployment was 12.7%. Both young men and women benefited from the improved job market in 2000, and employment rates for teens rose in all provinces.

MORE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

The picture was not as positive for teens who dropped out of school. In December 2000, 16% of teens aged 15 to 19 were not in school, up from 15.3% the year before. This increase is disturbing, even though the dropout rate in 2000 was well below the 1989 level of 20.7%.

TEEN EMPLOYMENT RATES, 1989, 1999 & 2000



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *various years.*

The most likely explanation for this rise is that more jobs were available for teens who were disaffected with school or wanted to take a break. But not all the dropouts had jobs. One of every three teens who was not in school in December 2000 was not working – meaning that about 5% of all teens were neither working nor in school. And among those teens not in school, there were just 2 1/2 full-time workers for every one part-time worker, whereas the ratio in 1989 had been five to one.

Many teens who drop out of school will return later to complete their studies. However, some risk being marginalized and excluded from the mainstream job market if they are out of school and unemployed for long periods of time.

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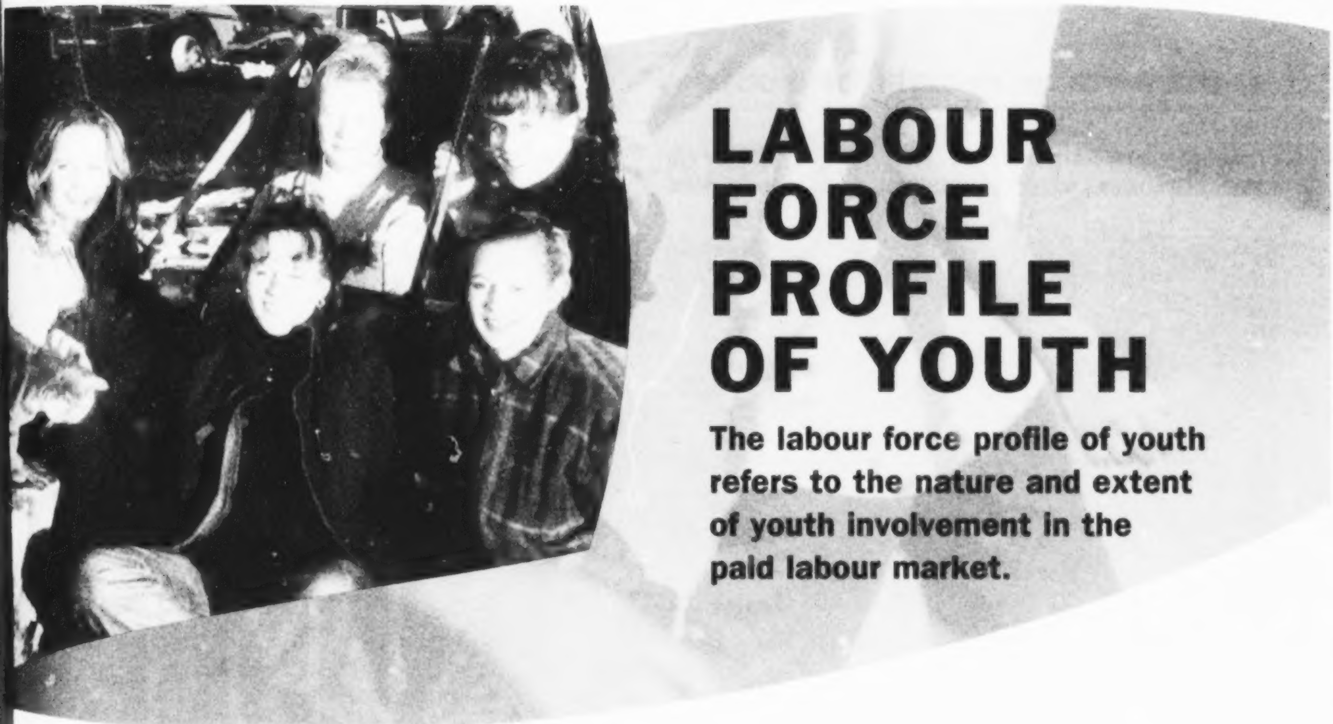

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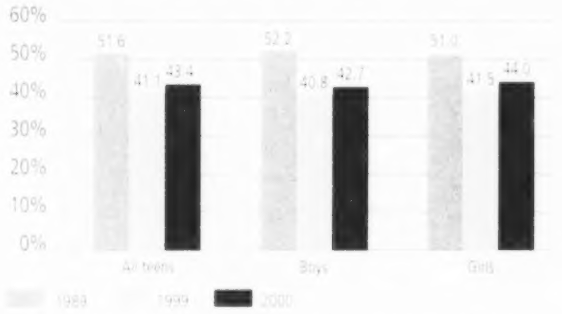

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TEEN EMPLOMENT RATES BY PROVINCE, 1989, 1999 & 2000

	1989	1999	2000
CAN	51.6%	41.1%	43.4%
NFLD	25.1%	21.5%	21.8%
PEI	48.0%	46.5%	49.0%
NS	42.7%	37.7%	37.9%
NB	38.7%	40.3%	40.7%
QC	44.4%	34.3%	37.1%
ON	58.5%	43.2%	46.7%
MAN	54.1%	51.1%	52.7%
SASK	48.7%	46.9%	47.4%
ALTA	54.9%	49.6%	50.0%
BC	55.1%	40.3%	40.5%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *various years.*

TEENS NOT IN SCHOOL, 1989, 1999 & 2000

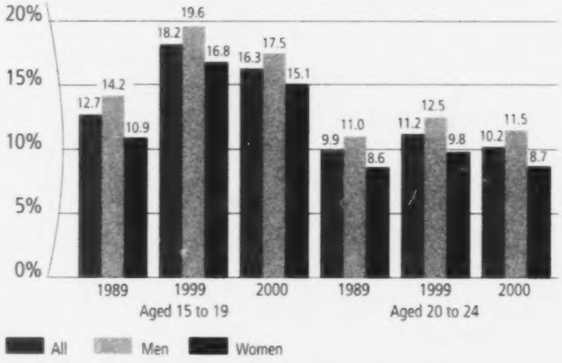
	Dec. 1989	Dec. 1999	Dec. 2000
% of all teens not in school	20.7%	15.3%	16.0%
of those, % employed	69.3%	67.2%	67.1%

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *various years.*

MORE JOBS FOR YOUTH

By 2000, the employment picture for youth aged 20 to 24 had improved significantly compared to 1999, with an unemployment rate of 10.2% – down a full percentage point from the year before. Conditions were almost as good as they had been in 1989, when the unemployment rate was 9.9% for youth in this age group. Unemployment among young men was higher than among young women. ◆

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, 1989, 1999 & 2000

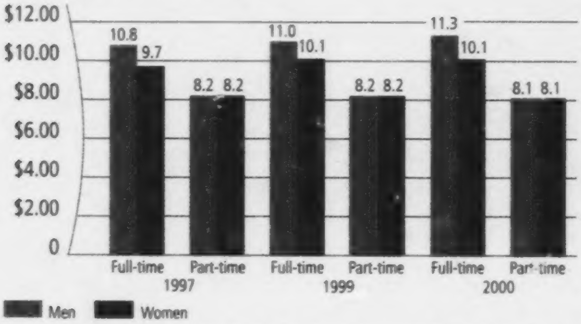


Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Historical Review, *various years.*

What do youth earn?

In 2000, youth aged 15 to 24 earned an average hourly wage of $9.59 – up slightly from $9.39 in 1997 – and young men earned significantly more per hour than young women ($10.11 versus $9.05). Not surprisingly, young people working full-time earned more than those who worked part-time. Between 1997 and 2000, the average hourly wage declined by almost 2% for young people working part-time, while it increased slightly for those working full-time. ◆

AVERAGE HOURLY WAGES OF YOUTH AGED 15-24, 1997 to 2000
($ per hour in constant 2000$)



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, *1997, 1999 & 2000.*

YOUNG WORKERS AND SAFETY

One in seven young workers is injured on the job, according to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Recently, almost 110,000 young people were seriously injured on the job in one year alone.

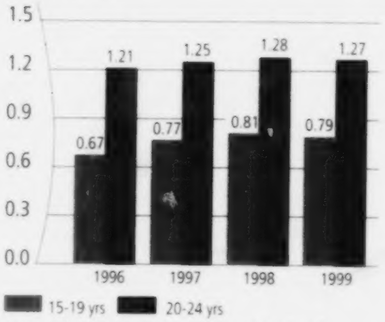
Most injuries among 15- to 19-year-olds are in the hospitality and retail sectors – usually from overexertion, slipping, being struck by objects, incorrect lifting, and other such commonplace causes. However, working in industries like construction, forestry and manufacturing can result in more serious injuries for young workers.

The British Columbia Workers' Compensation Board found that many young people and their parents were unaware of potential workplace hazards. According to their survey and focus groups, young workers have a sense of invincibility, an unwillingness to question authority and a tendency to take on high-risk tasks without proper instruction. They are often unaware of their rights concerning workplace health and safety.

According to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, there were over 62,000 time-loss injuries in 1999 among workers aged 15 to 24 in Canada, accounting for 17% of all injuries. The number of time-loss injuries was up from 58,800 in 1996, and the ratio of work injuries to the number of young workers increased slightly between 1996 and 1999. The ratio was higher for workers aged 20 to 24 than for workers aged 15 to 19 (1.27 versus 0.79).

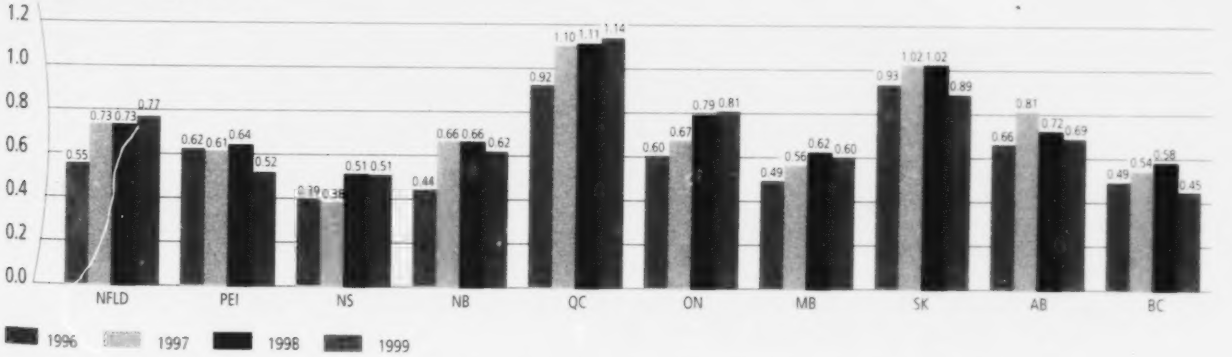
While the Canada-wide ratio of injuries to workers aged 15 to 19 was less than one, in Quebec it was 1.14 and in Saskatchewan, it was 0.89. The ratio has been increasing since 1996 in all but three provinces – PEI, Saskatchewan and BC. ◆

RATIO OF WORK INJURIES TO NUMBER OF WORKERS, BY AGE GROUP, 1996 to 1999



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, Work Injuries and Diseases.

RATIO OF WORK INJURIES TO NUMBER OF WORKERS, BY PROVINCE
Young workers aged 15-19



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, Work Injuries and Diseases.

Young Teens and Work

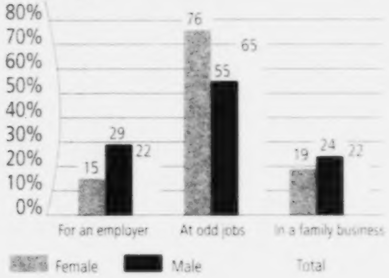
The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth provides insights into the work experiences of young teens during the school year and in the summer.

Work during the school year

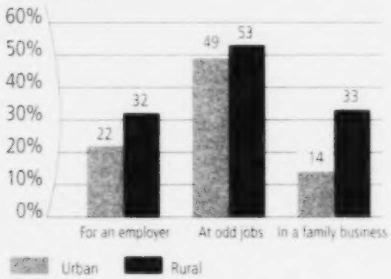
In 1998, more than one in five (22%) young people aged 14 and 15 worked for an employer during the school year and the same proportion worked in a family business. Boys were almost twice as likely as girls to be employed, and girls were more likely to work at odd jobs for pay. Almost two-thirds (65%) of young people worked at odd jobs.

Young people in two-parent families were as likely as those in lone-parent families to work for pay, but they were less likely to work at odd jobs (60% versus 65%), or in a family business (17%* versus 24%). *Data less reliable due to sample size.

WORK DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR, BY GENDER, 1998
Youth aged 14 & 15



SUMMER JOBS FOR URBAN & RURAL YOUTH, 1998
Youth aged 14 & 15



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

Almost half of these young teens worked less than five hours a week from Monday through Friday, and the vast majority (79%) worked less than 10 hours during the week. Most (84%) worked less than 10 hours on the weekend. Young men tended to work more hours than did young women.

When asked how much they had earned over the last week at their jobs, over half (54%) said they had earned $20 or more, 29% had earned $40 or more, and 31% had earned less than $10.

When asked if their work caused them to study less, the vast majority (83%) said no, but 17% said they studied somewhat less or a great deal less. Boys were more likely than girls to say that work interfered with their studying – 19% compared with 15%. Family structure (such as a two-parent or lone-parent family) did not affect this outcome, nor did family income nor whether the teen lived in a rural or urban community.

Summer employment

Almost one-quarter (23%) of young people aged 14 and 15 had a summer job with an employer in 1998, and half worked for pay doing odd jobs such as babysitting, mowing a neighbour's lawn, delivering flyers, and the like. Another 17% worked at a family business. Again, boys were more likely to work for pay and girls were more likely to work at odd jobs.

Young people living in low-income households were as likely as other youth to work for an employer or in a family business, but they were less likely to work at odd jobs (38% versus 52%). Youth in lone-parent families were less likely than those in two-parent families to work at odd jobs (46% versus 51%) or in a family business (14% versus 17%). Youth living in urban communities were less likely than those in rural communities to work.

For almost half (46%) of these young people, the summer job lasted four weeks or less, 38% worked 5 to 8 weeks, and 17% worked for 9 to 12 weeks. Young men worked longer than did young women, and youth in lone-parent families were more likely than those in two-parent families to work longer (9-12 weeks).

About half (47%) of the young people worked less than 10 hours a week, while 38% worked 15 or more hours a week. There was little difference by gender, but young people in lone-parent families worked more hours than did youth in two-parent families.

Summer jobs for young people often include the following: construction (just under 10%), camp (about 7%), restaurants (just under 7%), and work at stores or gas stations. Young women were more likely to work in a summer camp, while young men were more likely to work in construction.

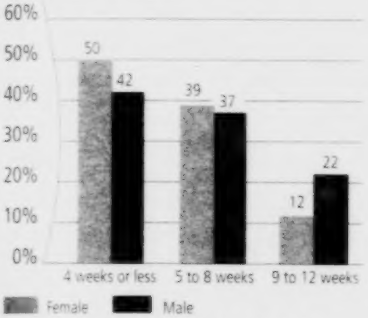
Work without pay

Almost one-quarter (24%) of young people worked without pay over the school year, while fewer (15%) did so over the summer. Boys and girls were equally likely to work without pay. Young people in two-parent families were more likely to work without pay (24%) than were youth in lone-parent families (19%).

How much money do young people have?

More than three-quarters (77%) of young people aged 12 to 15 get money from their parents. About one-third (34%) get money from odd jobs, about one-fifth (19%) get money from employment, and 29% get money from other sources, such as gifts from relatives. Older children (aged 14 and 15) are

DURATION OF SUMMER JOBS, BY GENDER, 1998
Youth aged 14 & 15



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

more likely than younger children to get money by working at a job or from odd jobs. Both age groups are equally likely to get money from their parents. Boys and girls are equally likely to get money from parents, and lone parents are just as likely as dual parents to give their children money. Families living below the low income cut-off are less likely to give their children money than are those living above the LICO – 73% versus 78%. Likewise, families in rural communities are less likely than those in urban communities to give their children money (70% and 79%, respectively).

How much money do they get? About two-thirds get $20 or less per week from their parents and one-quarter (23%) get $20 or less from odd jobs.

How do young people spend their money?

Young people aged 12 to 15 are most likely to spend their money on entertainment – videos, snacks and movies. However, almost half (48%) put some of their money into savings. Young women are much more likely than young men to spend their money on clothes, shoes and gifts.

Children living with lone parents are less likely to spend their money on things like videos, snacks and gifts, and more likely to spend it on public transportation and meals. They are less likely than children in two-parent families to save their money (40% compared with 50%). ◆

YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF JOB SECURITY

About half of all youth aged 16 to 24 lack confidence about their job security, but 70% are confident they could find an equivalent job if they lost their current one.

In 2000, one-quarter of all employed youth aged 16 to 24 felt there was a good chance of losing their job over the next couple of years, up from 21.2% in 1999. This lack of confidence about job security was comparable to that of adults. Another 21% of youth with jobs felt uncertain about the future, and about half said they were not worried. Young men were more likely than young women to feel that their job was at risk (26.8% versus 19.5%), while young women were more likely to be uncertain about their job security.

Job security increased with education level. Youth with some high school or less were most likely to fear they might lose their job over the next few years (32.5%), while those who had completed university were the least likely to believe they would lose their jobs (16.9%).

As household income increased, so did feelings of job security. Youth in the lowest income bracket were more than four times as likely as youth in the highest income bracket to fear job loss.

There were provincial differences as well. Young people in Alberta were the least likely (15.1%) and those in Atlantic Canada were the most likely (35.1%) to feel insecure about their jobs.

FINDING AN EQUIVALENT JOB

When it came to job-hunting in 2000, youth aged 16 to 24 were the most optimistic of all age groups about their potential to find a new job if they lost their current one. Seventy per cent were confident they could find an equivalent job within six months, 16% were not confident, and 14% were uncertain. Among adults, 64% of those aged 25 to 44 and only 47% of those aged 45 to 64 were as confident.

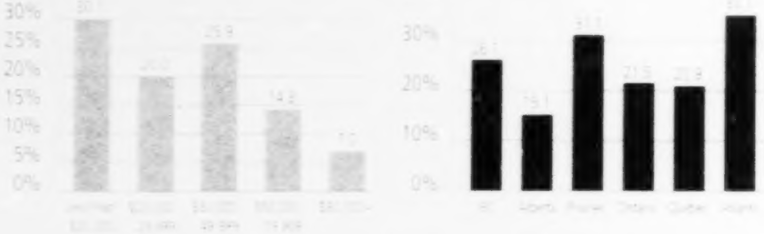
Since many young people are working at part-time jobs or just beginning their careers, the majority seem confident that their employment potential is going to improve or at least stay the same. However, the 70% who were confident about finding another job was down from 73.2% in 1999.

Young men were slightly more confident than young women that they would be able to find an equivalent job within six months (72.5% compared to 67.9%).

About three-quarters of young people in Ontario, the Prairies and Alberta were confident they could find an equivalent job within six months, while slightly less than two-thirds of youth in Quebec, the Atlantic provinces and BC felt the same way. ◆

"I THINK THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE I MAY LOSE MY JOB OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS." (Youth aged 16 to 24)

By household income **By region**



Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using polling data from [illegible] surveys conducted for The Personal Security Index, 1999 & 2000.

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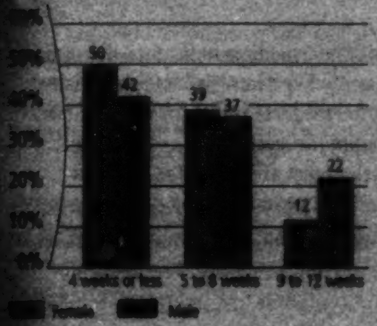

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using data from Statistics Canada's NLSCY, 1998.

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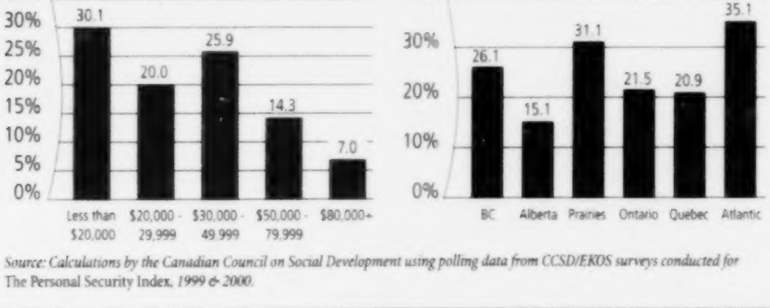

Source: Calculations by the Canadian Council on Social Development using polling data from CCSD/EKOS surveys conducted for The Personal Security Index, 1999 & 2000.

TECHNICAL NOTE

The Progress of Canada's Children is based on a large database of information on children, youth and families in Canada. It is built on **environmental indicators**, which represent the developmental influences that affect child development, and **progress indicators**, which are general measures of how well our children and youth are faring.

A three-tiered model has been developed to organize the wealth of data the CCSD has assembled on selected environmental and progress indicators. **Simple indicators** constitute the first tier. They represent data that are measured over time against a base period to indicate the direction of change. Simple indicators are grouped under a number of intermediate indicators, the second tier. These indicators represent key determinants or outcomes of child well-being. The **intermediate indicators** are grouped into a third tier of **composite indicators** that assess both the environment of child development and children's progress through specific developmental periods.

Because of space limitations, *The Progress of Canada's Children* presents only a small portion of the research. The following chart outlines the model of composite and intermediate indicators that is used. Please contact the CCSD for further information.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Family Life

- family structure
- work and family
- family dynamics
- parental health
- parental education

Economic Security

- level of income
- source of income
- distribution of income
- stability of income
- family expenditures

Physical Safety

- environmental hazards
- injuries
- crime and violence

Community Resources

- education
- housing
- health
- child and family supports
- leisure and culture

Civic Vitality

- affiliation
- participation
- expectations

PROGRESS INDICATORS

Health Status

- physical health
- socio-emotional health
- physical and social risks

Social Engagement

- family relationships
- peer relationships
- community relationships

Learning

- academic experiences and achievements
- non-academic skill development and leisure

Labour Force Profile of Youth

- labour force activity
- earnings and income

DATA SOURCES

The primary data for *The Progress of Canada's Children 2002* has been calculated by researchers at the Canadian Council on Social Development using information from the Statistics Canada surveys listed below. Additional data sources follow and they are listed according to the section of *Progress* in which they were used. Sources for the charts are provided with each chart. For more information about the data used in *The Progress of Canada's Children 2002*, please contact the CCSD.

PRIMARY DATA SOURCES:

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth **(NLSCY)**
The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), developed by Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, collects information on over 20,000 children (newborns to 15 years of age). Starting in 1994, the NLSCY will survey these children every two years until they reach adulthood. In the first cycle of the survey, both the child's primary caregiver and teacher were asked to provide information, as were children aged 10 and 11. In the second cycle of the survey in 1996, children aged 12 and 13 were also included, and in the third survey cycle in 1998, children aged 14 and 15 were included. The NLSCY includes a broad range of family, household, and community characteristics affecting child development. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1994, 1996 and 1998 surveys.

National Population Health Survey **(NPHS)**
The National Population Health Survey (NPHS), conducted by Statistics Canada, collects information related to the health of the Canadian population. A cross-section of information is obtained by surveying all members of the survey households (58,000 individuals). To collect longitudinal information, one respondent per household, aged 12 years and older, is surveyed (18,000 individuals). Data will be collected every two years, starting in 1994.

Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics **(SLID)**
Started in 1993, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) is an ongoing longitudinal survey that interviews each sample member over a six-year period. The longitudinal nature of this survey as well as its extensive data content allows analysis of issues related to the labour market and income, including low income and changes in income over time. Data used in this issue of *Progress* are from the 1999 survey.

1996 Census
Statistics Canada's 1996 Census provides national coverage of the entire Canadian population, including variables on demographic, social, cultural, labour force and income data, as well as details on dwellings, households and families. Generally, data are presented for Canada, the provinces, territories and for Census Metropolitan Areas. Some tables include comparisons with data from earlier Censuses.

Survey of Household Spending
This survey offers information about spending on a wide variety of goods and services, as well as data on dwelling characteristics and household equipment. The survey collects information such as household and family expenditures for food, shelter, child care, health care, recreation, reading materials, education, taxes, pension contributions, and much more. It also collects data such as the type of dwelling, tenure (owned or rented), number of rooms, and heating equipment used, as well as information on household equipment and vehicles. This survey replaces HFE and FAMEX. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 1999 survey.

General Social Survey **(GSS)**
Objectives of the GSS surveys are to gather data on social trends in order to monitor changes in the living conditions and well-being of Canadians, and to provide information on specific social policy issues of current or emerging interest. The GSS is a continuing program, with a survey cycle each year. Data used in this *Progress* report are from the 2000 GSS, Cycle 14, which focuses on the access to and use of information communication technology.

Labour Force Survey
Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) collects monthly information on the labour market activities of Canada's working-age population, including specific subgroups in the population. The microdata capture personal characteristics for all individuals in the household – such as information on age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, and family characteristics – as well as detailed labour force characteristics for household members aged 15 and older – such as information about hours of work, wages, occupation, duration of unemployment, and the like. Data are available by province and for the three largest census metropolitan areas of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver.

National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating
This survey, first conducted by Statistics Canada in 1997 as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey, was repeated in the fall of 2000, and current plans are to conduct it again in 2003. The 2000 NSGVP survey was developed in partnership between federal government departments (Canadian Heritage, Health Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, and Statistics Canada) and voluntary sector organizations (the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Volunteer Canada). The 2000 survey included a representative sample of 14,724 Canadians aged 15 and older, capturing data on many aspects of charitable giving, volunteering and participating.

Survey of Approaches to Educational Planning
This new survey was conducted by Statistics Canada in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada. Done in October 1999 as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey, it is the first household survey to collect detailed information on how Canadians prepare for their children's post-secondary education. Data concerning 20,353 children aged 18 and under were collected, including detailed information on both the children and the households. The survey identified financial preparations made by parents to prepare for their children's post-secondary education – such as savings being set aside, potential demands for student loans, and the like – along with non-financial preparations, such as communicating parental aspirations and expectations, the extent of parents' involvement in children's learning and schooling, and their attitudes and practices concerning homework and television viewing.

ADDITIONAL DATA SOURCES:

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Thanks also to the rest of the staff of the CCSD, all of whom make a valuable contribution to this project.

Photo credits:

Thanks to the following people for their photographic contributions to *The Progress of Canada's Children 2002*: Anne Allard, Brenda Anderson, Denis Archambault, Stephen Augustine, Louise Clarke, Leslie Cotnam, Diane Dufour, Gail Fawcett, Tina Georgantopoulos, Angela Gibson-Kierstead, Rachel Green, Liyu Guo, Henry Gzik, Curtis Hamill, Paul Hanvey, Lori Harrop, Mirian Hill (PhotoSensitive, Campaign 2000), Karen Jackson, John Kane, Irena Klimkovitch, Rebecca Kong, Maja Kovacevic, Michelle Laflamme, Guylène Laforce, Jennifer Lanzon, Marie-Claude Leclerc, Linda Niksic, Andrew Scott, Katherine Scott, Susan Scruton, Jacqueline Seifert, Arlette Sinquin, Ekuwa Smith, Tracy Taylor, Évariste Thériault, and Brian Valois.

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The CCSD gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the **Laidlaw Foundation**, **Health Canada**, and the **National Crime Prevention Centre** in producing *The Progress of Canada's Children 2002*.

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